

September, 1938

The American Mercury



The Eternal Jewish Problem	John W. Thomason, Jr.
Do You Suffer from Heart-Disease?	William M. Kinney
The Impossible War with Japan	George Fielding Eliot
Stalin is Russia's Worst Czar	William Henry Chamberlin
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Lawrence E. Spivak, *General Manager*

J. W. Ferman, *Circulation Manager*

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★★★ DEATH FROM A TOP HAT, by Clayton Rawson. \$2.00. *Putnam's*. The Great Merlini, a new character in sleuthdom, solves a knotty case involving many of his brother magicians. The writing is above-average in this field of fiction; Merlini seems slated for a popular and busy career.

★★★ THE TIME OF CHANGE, by Lucile Grebenc. \$2.00. *Doubleday, Doran*. Quietly absorbing novel in which the War of 1812 is played off against the heroine, Molly Eldridge, whose character is exceptionally well drawn. The scene is Stonington, Connecticut.

★ KINDLING, by Nevil Shute. \$2.50. *Morrow*. A millionaire puts a town in the English distressed areas on its feet. Mild satire that could easily have been far better.

★ BRIGHTON ROCK, by Graham Greene. \$2.50. *Viking*. Psychological gangster novel, done in the American manner by an Englishman. Mr. Greene strives to make his situations bizarre and his characters

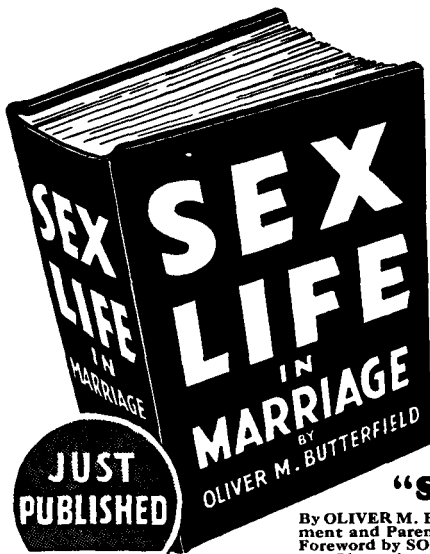
horrid, but we do these things much better over here.

★ BOWLEG BILL, by Jeremiah Digges. \$2.00. *Viking*. Mr. Digges, who acknowledges his debt to the Federal Writers' Project for sustaining him during this book's gestation, has made a rather unsuccessful attempt to set down the saga of a character well-known in Cape Cod mythology, the cowpuncher who got himself shanghaied on a whaling vessel. If this is a criterion of the stuff Federal-subsidized authors turn out, the taxpayers are entitled to a resounding squawk.

★ THE WILD GOOSE CHASE, by Rex Warner. \$2.75. *Knopf*. Allegorical novel: such stuff as a man might dream after reading Mr. Walter Lippmann, eating excessive quantities of rich food, and drinking of the more potent burgundies. Bloated oligarchs, oppressed and meritorious underdogs, two frisky girls not niggardly with their charms, and the attractive, clear-eyed, and simple-minded revolutionist. Obscure: but amusing in spots.

MEET ME ON THE BARRICADES, by Charles Yale Harrison. \$2.00. *Scribners*. The well-intentioned and earnest Mr. P. Herbert Simpson, an oboe player with a weak heart, a husky but controlled bridge-playing wife, and a suburban home nestling under the usual first and second trusts, tries to discover what they are all about — these social unrests and revolution. No one knows to what extent the author exposes here his own bewilderment in the existing situation; but the bewilderments of Mr. P. Herbert Simpson, and of the average reader, are complete.

(Continued on page 107)



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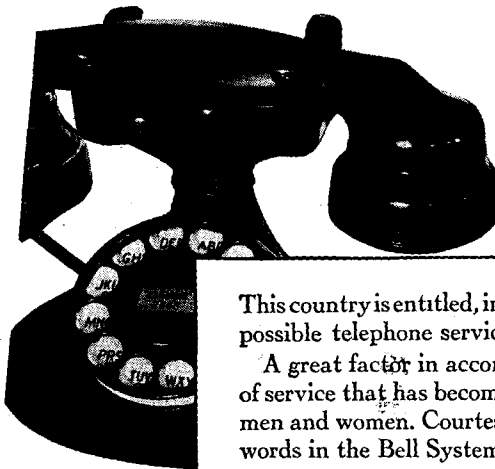
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The American MERCURY

STALIN IS RUSSIA'S WORST CZAR

BY WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN

STALINITE propaganda outside of Russia today is facing the prospect of a prolonged bear market. The fact that the Soviet dictator, in the words of a recent Moscow wisecrack, after killing all his friends, is beginning on his acquaintances, has had a disturbing effect on the miscellaneous fringe of Communist fellow-travellers in foreign countries. The familiar saw about no-omelettes-without-breaking-eggs, so often invoked when it was merely a question of starving millions of peasants to death, or consigning other millions to concentration camps, seems to have lost its consoling power, now that the Russian revolutionary crocodile has begun to display such a voracious appetite for its young.

And the latest Stalinite propa-

ganda circuses have obviously flopped. There was a good deal of ballyhoo at first about the marvellously "Democratic" new Soviet Constitution. But this has visibly diminished in volume, since the introduction of the Constitution happened to coincide with a period of extra terrorism directed against all Soviet citizens who might be tempted to avail themselves of the liberties so profusely promised in it. When election-time came around, even the stupidest foreign Comrade could scarcely miss the point when 99.5 per cent majorities for *Führer* Stalin so neatly matched 99.4 per cent majorities for *Führer* Hitler. The recent clownish pose, furthermore, of the American disciples of Moscow as the sole legitimate heirs of Wash-

ington, Lincoln, and Dan'l Boone has not, I imagine, brought many applications for membership from the American Legion and the D.A.R. And it has caused some severe headaches among those of the faithful who prefer to take their Marx straight.

The net result of the prolonged epidemic of homicide, with Communists as preferred victims, has been a decline in the quality of Stalinite propaganda and in the number of American Left-Wing intellectuals who would be willing to march in a Browder-for-President parade. Some of the oldest and most faithful pro-Soviet batteries have mysteriously ceased firing. One of the staunchest word-painters of idyllic conditions in the Soviet Union recently ventured the following private confession:

I haven't been talking much about Russia during the last two years. You see, China and Spain are more in demand, and then these executions (when there are so many of them and of such unexpected people) are a little hard to explain.

There remains, however, a last line of defense for "friends of the Soviet Union" who do not like to take a complete loss on their intellectual and emotional investment in Stalinism. This consists of a bland assumption that every bad thing in the Soviet Union is a car-

ry-over, in milder form, from the horrific practices of Czarist times, while every credit item in the Russian balance-sheet is attributable to Soviet initiative. For instance, any obvious deficiency in food, clothing, and housing is brushed aside with the thought that, after all, the masses must have been much worse off under the Czars. The same comforting reflection goes for mass-executions, for forced-labor, for famines, for censorship, for everything in the Soviet Union that doesn't bear out the preconceived idea of the blessings of a Socialist order. Again and again, in writing about the Soviet Union, one encounters the assumption that Russia before the Revolution was a kind of howling wilderness, where a sadistic ruling class reveled in unspeakable orgies, while it plied the whip on the backs of a sodden mass of serfs. What lends plausibility to this caricature is the profound ignorance of Russian history in the United States. With the exception of a few specialized monographs, I cannot think of an American work which would deserve a place in a bibliography of first-rate books on Russian history. To the average American, pre-war Russia is a vague compound of exiles clanking their chains on the way to Siberia, wolves attacking

snowbound travellers on the steppes, mobs breaking out in pogroms, and hair-raising contests of wits between harried revolutionaries and grim policemen and spies.

I would not suggest that such occurrences did not have their place in the Czarist picture. But they have acquired unwarranted proportions in the American view of the background of the Bolshevik Revolution. The constructive achievements of the Czarist regime have been as much under-estimated as those of the Soviet Union have been exaggerated. The parallels, furthermore, between the pre-war Russian aristocracy and the present Soviet dictatorship have not been stressed. When I was living in Russia I could often anticipate the next move of Stalin and the Gay-Pay-Oo by reading Kluchevsky's magnificent description of the doings of Ivan the Terrible and his special killers, who were known as *oprichniki*. I devoted one chapter of my *Russia's Iron Age* to a fairly extensive compilation of administrative and psychological likenesses between Czarism and Sovietism. For some of the more striking and convincing parallels I had to go pretty far back into the darkest recesses of medieval Russia.

But does this mean that the

wholesale executions, the colossal exploitation of forced labor, the all-pervading espionage, all the things that turn the great majority of long-term foreign residents of the Soviet Union into severe critics of the regime, are merely the result of a bad hereditary taint? Is it an adequate comment on every new Soviet atrocity to refer vaguely to the supposed horrors of Czarism? How does Stalin's personal homicide record compare with those of, say, Nicholas I and Alexander III, to mention two of the more modern Czars with reputations for unbending sternness? A complete comparison between Czarist and Soviet Russia would require a large book, if not an encyclopedia. But a few salient and indisputable facts, drawn from such varied fields as political repression, administration of justice, freedom of elections and the press, censorship of art and letters, supply of food and clothing can, I think, supply pretty definite and unequivocal answers to the foregoing questions.

II

Both systems have been subjected to terrorist attacks, the Czarist more often than the Soviet. There is, however, a noteworthy contrast in the sequels to these attacks.

When the Soviet satrap in Petrograd, Moses Uritzky, in 1918 was shot by a Socialist-Revolutionary on the same day another Socialist-Revolutionary wounded Lenin in Moscow, over 500 persons, none of whom had anything to do with the attacks, were taken out of the Petrograd prisons and massacred. Similar butcheries, on a smaller scale, were staged all over the Soviet Union. In the vast majority of cases there was not even a pretense that the victims had been guilty of specific crimes. Any batch of prisoners served the executioners' turn, and anyone with property or education was likely to be in a Soviet prison at that time.

This indiscriminate mass-killing as a reprisal for terrorist attacks has been practiced repeatedly in the Soviet Union, one of the most striking instances being the slaughter after the assassination of Sergei Kirov in 1934. One hundred and thirty-three persons, according to official communiqués, were put to death as a sacrifice to the shades of Kirov; and of these only fourteen, including the assassin, were accused of complicity in the murder. The other executions were purely terroristic reprisals against some of the unlucky inmates of Soviet prisons. Since that time the ghost of Kirov has been

conjured up whenever a new group of eminent Communists was marked for slaughter.

So much for the Soviet way of dealing with real or alleged terrorist opposition. What was the record of "the bloody Czars" in the face of similar provocation? The assassination of Alexander II, the Czar who abolished serfdom, was at least as grave a crime, from the Czarist standpoint, as the killing of Uritzky or Kirov, from the Soviet standpoint. But only five persons, all unquestionably implicated, were put to death. There was no massacre of suspected revolutionaries in prisons, no series of subsequent trials claiming new batches of victims and stretching over a period of years. The same relative moderation was shown after the suppression of the uprising of the Decembrists who tried to take advantage of the death of Alexander I and raised a revolt of some of the Guards regiments in St. Petersburg. Here again there were only five death sentences. Many participants were condemned to hard labor in the Siberian mines. But the Soviet Government has sent many people to equally-unpleasant places for offenses considerably less spectacular than military revolt in the national capital. And Pushkin was able to

publish a poem of sympathy with the exiled Decembrists. There are very few odes to condemned Trotskyists published in Russia today.

The many veteran Communists who have been sentenced to death by Stalin's quick-firing courts could have offered interesting testimony on contrasts between Czarist and Soviet justice. Rykov and Bukharin, Zinoviev and Kamenev, Karakhan and Yenukidze, were all old offenders in the records of the pre-war Russian police. Their revolutionary program aimed at the overthrow of the Imperial regime. Had Stalinite judicial standards prevailed in pre-war Russia every one of them, indeed every subsequent leader of the Bolshevik Revolution, would have been put to death. Still more striking is the case of Stalin himself. Implicated in the famous Tiflis State Bank hold-up, which was accompanied by bomb-throwing and considerable loss of life, Stalin was arrested five times for revolutionary activity. Each time he was sent to places of exile where he was so carelessly guarded that he always escaped to begin his revolutionary work where he had left off. One wonders how many individuals who plotted against Stalin have ever been able to do it — twice.

The experience of Lenin is in-

structive. His older brother, Alexander, had been executed for participation in an attempt to kill Czar Alexander III. Under Soviet administrative practice, which visits its political offenses on the relatives of persons who commit them, this by itself would have ended Lenin's chances of educational or other advancement. In pre-war Russia he was able to enter the University of St. Petersburg and, when he was twice arrested for revolutionary activity, his treatment, as described in the reminiscences of his wife, was markedly different from the hard-labor-on-short-rations which is the regular lot of any Soviet citizen who is accused of any kind of "counter-revolution". Lenin served a prison sentence under conditions so mild that he was able to finish his work on the development of Capitalism in Russia while he was being kept in custody at the State expense. During his second sentence — exile to Siberia — he was allowed to study and write, develop his revolutionary theories, and divert himself with hunting and fishing.

Measured by the standards of *habeas corpus*, the Czarist system was harsh, stifling, oppressive. Measured by the standards of *habeas cadaver*, which were established by Lenin and Trotzky and

brought to their fullest flower by Stalin, the pre-war Russian methods of stamping out political opposition seem almost amusingly mild and full of muddling inefficiency.

The atmosphere in the courts was quite different in pre-revolutionary times. Incredible as it must seem to the Soviet generation, advocates actually defended their clients, and children did not shout for the blood of their guilty parents. The self-stultifying confessions which occur with such monotonous regularity in Soviet political trials were the mark only of weak characters in Czarist trials. Inasmuch as many victims of Soviet "class justice" have also faced pre-revolutionary courts it seems obvious that the pressure on the prisoner behind the scenes, whether it takes the form of physical torture or of threats against relatives, is now much stronger.

In present-day Soviet elections there is just one ticket to vote: Stalin's. The electoral system in pre-war Russia was badly rigged; but at least the voter in elections to the Duma had some element of choice. Several Bolshevik deputies sat in the Duma and delivered speeches which were often edited for them by Lenin in exile. Imagine a deputy in a Congress of Soviets to-

day delivering a speech prepared for him by Trotsky!

The same contrast appears when one begins to draw comparisons in freedom of thought and expression. The Russian before the Revolution, if he had any intelligence, knew that his morning newspaper avoided some subjects entirely and treated others gingerly. But he was not subjected to a daily dithyramb about the unique wisdom and virtue of the ruling Czar, accompanied by loud ballyhoo about the supposed superiority of Russia's political and economic system to that of every other country. The newspapers of pre-war Russia, even though they were forced to tread warily on many subjects, represented after all the views of editors who were privately far from whole-hearted admirers of the existing regime and some of whom, at least, discovered roundabout ways of communicating this criticism to their readers. In the Soviet press, on the other hand, one cannot find a trace of individual personality. Whether it is published in Moscow, in Kharkov, in Tiflis, or in Vladivostok, the Soviet newspaper repeats the same limited stock of ideas in practically identical phraseology with the grinding monotony of a used gramophone record playing the

same tune over and over again. The few Communists who revealed some editorial personality and wrote with wit and erudition (Radek, Bukharin, Ossinsky, Kamenev, Sosnovsky) invariably came to untimely ends.

In censorship of literature and art, Czarist whips have given place to Soviet scorpions. Censorship in pre-war Russia was stupid, petty, and vexatious. But it possessed the great merit, by comparison with the Soviet method of thought-control, of being purely negative in character. The pre-war Russian author was not required to take as the starting point of his art that the Czarist system was supremely good. Indeed no one who reads the Russian classics, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, or Gogol, would be apt to gain the idea that Czarist Russia was a particularly happy or prosperous country. On the other hand, the Soviet novelist or poet, as a member of the Soviet Writers' Union, must subscribe to the following nonsensical ideal of literary creation:

The creation of works of high artistic significance, saturated with the heroic struggle of the international proletariat, with the grandeur of the victory of socialism, and reflecting the great wisdom and heroism of the Communist Party.

This is no empty formula: vigi-

lant censors, envious rivals, and an ever-watchful political police see to it that swift punishment follows any flagging in zeal for "the great wisdom and heroism of the Communist Party", even though most of its surviving founding fathers have been summarily bumped off, following confessions of crimes which varied in nature from the puerile to the insane. Nothing in pre-war annals of censorship can equal the periodic "purges" which are carried out on the "literary front", or the amiable practice of some leading Soviet authors who utilized their close relations with the Gay-Pay-Oo to suppress unwelcome literary competitors and force their own plays on unwilling producers. Perhaps the best note on the contemporary state of literature in the Soviet Union was the uncommonly candid remark of a delegate to a Soviet writers' congress, who, on being asked why he had published nothing for some years, replied: "When there is a pogrom you don't go out on the street".

The stock reply of the trained Soviet guide to the credulous foreign tourist who has been unpleasantly surprised by some visible shortage or some price which looks fantastically high is this: "Oh, but think how wretchedly poor the

people were before the Revolution." The tourist thereupon subsidizes and is ready to pass on the same observation to the next doubting Thomas he meets. This, however, washes no better than the other stock-in-trade arguments of Soviet propaganda, if it is put through the wringer of facts and figures. A recent AP dispatch from Moscow gives the following wage and price comparisons, as between 1914 and 1937:

MONTHLY WAGES (IN RUBLES)

	1914	1937
Building trades	46.80	224
Mechanics	40.50	240

PRICES (IN KOPECKS)

	1914	1937
Black bread	6	85
Pork	59	1100
Cheese	98	1480
Butter	117	2000
Milk	14	170
Cotton cloth	21	1200
Men's shoes	1200	25,000
Men's suits	4000	89,000

In other words, while the nominal wages of manual-workers (a class more favored than brain-workers or peasants) are five to six times as high as they were before the World War, costs of food and clothing are up from twelve to twenty times, by comparison with pre-war prices, with a sixty-fold boost for cotton cloth. Obviously the common man's chance

for three square meals a day was better under the backward and unregenerate Czars than under the new Socialist dispensation.

III

It is far from my desire or intention to write a nostalgic idealization of Life in Old Russia. That may well be left to the *Gone-with-the-Wind* school of fiction almost certain to arise in Russia after a few more purges and a further lapse of time have paved the way for a new attitude on the part of Russian writers toward a period that will seem far off, gay and spacious, just as the ante-bellum South seems to many American fiction readers today. The Czarist system received its verdict at the court of history. Perhaps the severest condemnation that could be passed on it is that in many ways it helped to make possible the triumphant emergence of Communism.

But it is only a cockeyed view of the Russian past that could see in Czarism a justification or even a full explanation of Stalinism. Not one of the five Czars who ruled Russia from the beginning of the Nineteenth Century until the Revolution has a homicide record remotely comparable with Stalin's.

The latter, combining the power of Tamerlane with the technique of Al Capone, has no peer in Russian history until one reaches the psychopathically-bloodthirsty Ivan the Terrible. No Czar or Czarina since Ivan comes anywhere near Stalin in systematically killing off his closest associates and collaborators. In order to match Stalin's record a Czar would have been obliged to kill most of his cabinet ministers, his best known generals, and a goodly sprinkling of his diplomats and captains of industry. There has been no such holocaust in Russian history since the Romanov dynasty ascended the throne in 1613.

Another point on which the most ruthless Czars could have learned much from Stalin is the weird alleged-motivation of his killings. The offenses for which revolutionaries suffered under the Czars were credible and conceivable: participation in riots and insurrections, holding of forbidden meetings, circulation of illegal literature. One does not recall that they were accused, much less brought to confess such grotesque crimes as putting poison in the Czar's soup, wrecking railway trains and setting fire to mines, failing to provide bulls with the right kind of cows, and injecting

into silkworms parasites that would make them fail to perform their duty with mulberry leaves. Not only is Stalin's homicide record far longer than that of his Imperial predecessors; his imagination is infinitely gaudier.

Of course the Czarist method of arbitrary rule played its part in shaping the nature of the Soviet State. "Bloody Sunday", when troops fired on a demonstration of workers who were approaching the Imperial Palace with a petition for better living-conditions, had its historical counterpart in Kronstadt in 1921 when Trotsky, now so eloquent about Stalin's suppression of working-class Democracy, personally took charge of the sanguinary smashing of the movement of the Kronstadt workers and sailors, who were calling for free Soviets instead of Communist dictatorship. The Okhrana (the Czarist secret police) was the spiritual godfather of the Gay-Pay-Oo, as the ritual murder-fraud of Czarist times was the legitimate ancestor of the sabotage-fraud of the Soviet.

But, in terrorism as in physics, there is such a thing as relativity. And, on any basis that can reasonably be taken, Stalin has far surpassed the excesses of any of the more modern Czars. For this there

are several reasons. It is not the first time that doctrinaire revolutionary fanaticism has proved one of the most destructive of human passions. The very nature of the Soviet State, with its complete concentration of political and economic power in the hands of a single dictator, goes far beyond the absolutist possibilities of Czarism, at least in its later and more civilized phase. A Czar, even if he had desired to do so, would have lacked the economic means to put over such an organized famine as Stalin devised in 1932-33.

Moreover, the Revolution completely destroyed the influence on State affairs of the pre-war Russian educated class, a considerable part of which was steeped in ideas of Liberalism and Humanitarianism, derived partly from contact with Western Democratic countries, partly from the influence of Tolstoy and other indigenous Russian mystics and philosophers. This class has been physically decimated, with many of its members killed and a much larger number driven

into exile. The recent trials have pretty well completed the liquidation of the Western-educated intellectuals in the Communist Party. The pre-war Russian engineer, teacher, lawyer, physician had a share in the humanistic culture of Europe. To the Stalinite younger generation in the present-day Soviet Union, brought up on a diet of ever bigger-and-better blood purges, this culture means about as much as the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas would have meant to a Turkish janissary.

This last line of defense of apologists for the Soviet Union, the effort to interpret every Soviet outrage as just a regrettable milder reflection of pre-war Russian barbarism, simply does not stand up before a serious examination of comparative atrocity records. The more one contemplates Stalin's career and methods of government the more one feels that his Czarist predecessors, if judged by his standards, might well have qualified as altruistic defenders of civil liberties.



EXPLAINING THE NEW DEAL'S POPULARITY

By FRANÇOIS MARIE AROUET DE VOLTAIRE

It is difficult to free fools from the chains they revere.

AMERICA'S TORTURE-CHAMBER

BY ANTHONY M. TURANO

WHEN it was first proposed to transform Alcatraz, in San Francisco Bay, into a modern Devil's Island for the visitation of special social vendetta on the gangsters and tough hombres of the Republic, it was obvious that the plan was richer in moral indignation than sociological wisdom. As Commissioner Stearnes of Massachusetts remarked, "the history of the world is bespattered with stories of wretchedness and misery resulting from such concepts of the care of the criminal". And indeed, France, following a recent report to the Chamber of Deputies urging that the infamous isolation system in Guiana be abolished as "a notorious failure, inefficient from a penal point of view" and a blot "on the good name of France", has stopped exporting its criminals to Devil's Island and vicinity.

Nevertheless, in the fall of 1933, the same discredited theories of criminology were pronounced valid in America, and our "one tough penitentiary" was declared ready for tenancy. A medieval

code of "punishment and not reformation" was put in force; and the agents of justice proceeded to exemplify the general proposition that civilized society should stoop to the level of its lowest rat. It is true that, except for an occasional beating administered by guards, the punishments are not directly corporeal, but clumsily psychological. The prisoner knows, for instance, that release through pardon or parole is usually out of the question. His first glance at the precipitous cliffs of "The Rock", and the turbulent tides that surround it, further convinces him that illegal escape is nothing more than a miraculous possibility. Yet the institution is only a mile away from the nearest shore, and the immured tenants are constantly tantalized by the view of several alluring cities. On clear days they may even see the vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the closer sections of San Francisco. The barbarous effect is the same as chaining a starving man to a wall and spreading a feast beyond his reach.

But the process of mental deterioration is by no means left to such purely geographical misfortunes. There are some clever official devices to the same purpose. After the prisoners have been locked up for the night, it is customary, almost every evening, for the guards to entertain their charges with a peculiar lullaby consisting of the staccato of target practice conducted near the cell house. To make sure that this lesson on the small value of human life will be appreciated by the dull-est convict, the serenaders frequently leave their dummy targets in the yard, so the prisoners may inspect them for evidence of good marksmanship.

Another interesting disciplinary regulation is mentioned by William H. Ambrose, an inmate released for deportation in 1935. "You are supposed to eat what you take at the tables," he says. "If you leave food on your plate, three days in a row, you don't get any meals the next."

But the prison rule that is really supposed to inculcate a lasting respect for the majesty of the law is the one condemning every inmate to almost perpetual silence. To be sure, Warden James A. Johnson, the duly-constituted Torquemada of the place, recently explained

that there are times when a convict may open his mouth with official sanction. "The prisoners at work are allowed to talk on matters regarding their tasks", and they are also permitted during meals "to ask for food to be passed to them from the men across the table or beside them". Moreover, if a convict has been obedient, he may enjoy two and one-half hours of loquacity under guard on Saturdays; and there is also a visiting period of forty-five minutes each month when, separated from his relatives by a three-foot-wall and plate glass, he may broadcast confidences through a speaking tube. But these exceptions merely give the general rule a more exquisite effect. According to Ambrose, "not a word can be spoken by any convicts in line, at the table, at work, or in their cells. . . . If you whisper or use a signal and get caught you are severely punished." In the opinion of another discharged convict, Al I. Loomis, the muzzle regulation is so "man breaking" that the "big and little shots of crime are lucky to get out sane". Convict Number 293, who was recently interviewed by T. H. Alexander for the *Saturday Evening Post*, says that "out of a total population of 317, fourteen went violently insane during my last year

on the Rock, and any number of others were what we call 'stir crazy', going about their familiar routine like punch-drunk boxers".

If a prisoner is found to have exceeded his quota of words, the favorite remedy is solitary confinement in a dungeon, a cubicle of damp concrete five feet wide, eight feet long and seven feet high, without light or ventilation. To make the ordeal more impressive, hunger is imposed as an additional penalty—nothing but water on the first day, bread and water thereafter, with a "subsistence meal", every three to five days, presumably to prevent atrophy of the stomach.

II

One of the announced purposes of this regime of systematic cruelty was the general terrorization of the entire prison population of the Federal government. The inferior convict who became unruly in such purgatories as Fort Leavenworth and Atlanta was threatened with a transfer to the full-fledged inferno of Alcatraz. Thus the quality of the rotten eggs in a general basket would be improved by picking out the most putrid ones for individual wrapping. But the fear of sterner punishment has

never made anybody submissive to milder castigation. If penitentiary discipline were a simple matter of increasing the tortures, there would be a valid argument for the restoration of the rack. It should be a significant fact that the insane asylums of the Republic have managed, without resorting to barbarity, to keep their mild and raving cases in the same institutions. It goes without saying, therefore, that the inauguration of the new prison has failed to transform the older penitentiaries into happy Abbeys of Theleme.

It is equally true that the Alcatraz prison itself has not been a particularly convincing example of peace and harmony. Two years ago, there was a mutiny of a hundred inmates for the purpose of obtaining more humane treatment. The revolt was homeopathically "cured" by solitary confinement on bread and water. A few months thereafter, a fellow prisoner stabbed Al Capone, for his refusal to take up the cause of his buddies. Then followed a sit-down strike, during which the warden was slugged; and again peace was restored through the usual method of starvation in the dungeons.

If the inmates of Alcatraz are too unruly to make good convicts and too dangerous to be at large

it would seem to follow that their timely hara-kiri should be encouraged as a social and individual blessing. Yet the main occupation of the guards is to save their charges from self-destruction. Several times a day, the prisoners are compelled to face an "electric eye" that will detect the smallest piece of metal in their clothing.

The ideal Alcatraz convict is evidently a taciturn fellow who calmly awaits a demise through the cumulative effect of penitentiary discipline. But the human instinct to escape hopeless suffering is often greater than that of self-preservation. Rube Persful chopped off his hand with an ax in order to gain temporarily, in the prison hospital, the humanities due a convalescent. Two of his pals, Jimmy Groves and Whitey Lewis managed to have themselves returned to Leavenworth by slashing their wrists with smuggled razor blades. When Dutch Bowers attempted to sever his jugular vein with his broken eye-glasses, he was put in solitary confinement. He later scaled a prison fence, thereby inducing a guard to shoot him with fatal and humane effect. Some time later, another inmate used a razor blade to take himself to another realm whose terrors were at least unknown. Only a few weeks

ago two more wards of the government plunged over a wall during a foggy day. Whether they were mercifully drowned, or managed to escape on a raft is a matter of conjecture.

In several other cases, Nature herself seems to have declared a moratorium on punishment by depriving the victims of their reason. The notorious Al Capone now spends his time singing operatic arias, in utter oblivion of the silence rule, while he childishly makes and unmakes his prison cot. It was recently reported by Postal Inspector Ivan V. Kenney that Mike Telarico, another erstwhile tenant of Alcatraz, is now trying to regain his senses at a Federal penal hospital in Springfield, Missouri. Two more cases of lunacy are mentioned by Al I. Loomis. One of them suffered from the illusion that he was in danger unless his head was wrapped in a towel. The other was such a complete mental wreck that every passing airplane sent him "screaming and diving for cover". He often walked past the convict "dead line", until "the tower guards would start throwing bullets around him".

In brief, Alcatraz stands as a monument to human stupidity and pointless barbarity. A proper

function of turnkeys is, of course, to keep anti-social beings from molesting the relatively decent outsiders. The protagonists of capital punishment insist that a similar salutary service is performed by the gallows and the electric or gas chair. But everything beyond the death penalty or protective confinement is gratuitous sadistic revenge.

Furthermore, many inmates of Alcatraz are life-termers, destined to end their days in their cells. The administration of slow death or gradual lunacy in such cases cannot possibly yield a rational benefit to the offenders; and the only effect on the law-abiding taxpayer is the footing of an annual bill presented by public servants whose function is that of professional torturers. It may not be easy to wax sentimental about the tough hides

of such personages as Al Capone and "Machine Gun" Kelly. But it is equally true that they are members of the human race, no less than other social undesirables whose insanity is more obviously physiological. They must be securely segregated, of course, for the protection of the law-abiding population. But the average normal citizen has no special affection for unnecessary cruelty, and his worship of martyrs is proverbial. An expensive public institution ought to have some logical idea of what it is seeking to accomplish toward the public weal. It is not easy to perceive the sociological wisdom of transforming convicted scoundrels into raving maniacs. Their summary execution would reflect more humanity and official dignity than the maintenance of a costly suite of torture chambers.



GOOD GOVERNMENT — AS OF 1930

BY FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT

To bring about government by oligarchy, masquerading as democracy, it is fundamentally essential that practically all authority and control be centralized in our National Government. The individual sovereignty of our States must first be destroyed.

THE IMPOSSIBLE WAR WITH JAPAN

BY GEORGE FIELDING ELIOT

A WAR does not just happen. War is a human activity, surcharged with risk, certain to be attended by heavy loss; it is undertaken by governments and peoples under the impulsion of fear, or greed, or perhaps just a fiery crusading spirit, when the results to be achieved seem commensurate with the risk and loss, or when the *status quo* becomes less endurable than the prospect of the risk and loss. But a war which, by reason of its perfectly-known military, geographical, and strategical factors, cannot, demonstrably, turn out to the permanent advantage of either side, a war between nations so situated that neither has anything very serious to fear from the other within its own selected sphere of influence and activity, is a war that is not going to take place. It is an impossible war.

Just such a war is the long-talked-of struggle between Japan and the United States for the "mastery of the Pacific". On the one hand we have a military-theological dictatorship with well-defined Imperial

ambitions in East Asia, ambitions which have now involved Japan in a desperate struggle with a great continental nation which has united to resist the further accomplishment of those ambitions. The situation is one which is, in all probability, going to endure for many years. It is absurd to imagine that the leaders of modern Japan think themselves capable of establishing their East Asian empire with one hand and extending their naval authority over the broad Pacific with the other. Japan has not the resources for so gigantic a task, and no one knows that better than the extremely astute and hard-headed little gentlemen who are the present masters of her destinies.

On the other hand, we have our great sprawling Democracy, inhabited, it is true, by a turbulent and even at times, belligerent people, possessed of a powerful Navy and enormous resources, but a nation which has plenty of domestic problems to worry about, which is devoid of imperialistic ambitions

for other people's territory (having gorged itself to repletion thereon during the last century), and which, thank Heaven, possesses about the brightest and best-informed group of military and naval advisers in the world. These advisers have repeatedly and tirelessly informed their political superiors that seven thousand miles of sea is an almost insuperable barrier to the making of a successful war.

While these conditions endure, war between Japan and the United States is not within the realm of reasonable possibility.

In further support of this statement I wish to present the facts — the cold, hard facts as they might be listed in what is called “an estimate of the situation” by the military advisers of either government. Let us take the Japanese point-of-view first.

II

Primarily, an attack by Japan upon the United States would be directed against the American possessions and forces easily within Japanese reach. These are the Philippine Islands, Guam, the Asiatic Fleet, and the two Marine organizations in China.

Our military forces in the Philippines include about 11,000 officers

and men. The harbor of Manila is protected by the strong and well-armed insular fortress of Corregidor. The air force consists of three squadrons. There is also the army of the new Philippine Commonwealth, which consists of about 8000 officers and men, imperfectly equipped and short of artillery and planes. Our Asiatic Fleet consists of one heavy cruiser, one light cruiser, four gunboats, thirteen destroyers (of World-War vintage), six submarines, and seven assorted auxiliary vessels — plus six small gunboats on patrol duty in Chinese waters. It possesses a total of eight aircraft. The nearest reinforcements are in the Hawaiian Islands, some 4800 miles away.

Against these naval forces the strength of the Japanese fleet is, of course, overwhelming. Their First and Second Fleets, which include all the ten battleships and the greater part of the modern cruisers, destroyers, and aircraft carriers, have been little used in the “China incident” (save as the aircraft from the carriers have been employed), and are ready for immediate action except for vessels undergoing re-fit. As to the military force available for an invasion of Luzon, much would depend on the state of affairs on the Asiatic mainland at the moment. The Japanese commit-

ments in China and on the Russian frontier are heavy; but unless the Russian situation becomes really threatening, it seems probable that 50,000 good troops (say three divisions) might be spared.

It is hardly to be doubted that such a Japanese force could effect a landing in Luzon, probably at two or more points, defeat the American-Philippine forces, and bottle up what was left of our garrison in the fortress of Corregidor before any help could possibly arrive.

Guam, with its tiny garrison of 150 Marines, could offer no worthwhile resistance. The 2600 Marines at Shanghai and the 500 at Peiping and Tientsin would be in no position to act effectively.

The main American fleet, based on Hawaii, would thus, soon after the outbreak of hostilities, find itself without a base in the Western Pacific. The radius of action of a modern fleet is about 2500 miles,¹ which must be drastically reduced if fighting or maneuvering at high speed is to be undertaken. Hence, for the moment the Japanese would be reasonably secure in their new conquests, and might consider what further steps they could take to attack America.

But then, immediately, the factor

of distance would become all-important. For just as the American Navy has no fleet base in the Western Pacific, so the Japanese Navy has none in the Eastern Pacific. Their most advanced position is in the Marshall Islands, about 2500 miles southeast of Yokohama and about 2000 miles wsw of Hawaii; a little over 4000 miles from San Francisco, and well over 6000 from Panama. To the northward, about 1000 miles of sea separate the uppermost of the Japanese Kuriles from Attu, the outermost of our Aleutian chain; but the distance from the Japanese naval base at Ominato to Dutch Harbor in Unalaska is more than twice that.

At Pearl Harbor, in the Hawaiian Islands, we possess a first-rate naval base, with docking accommodations for the largest ships; the gun and mine defenses are formidable. There is a garrison of some 21,000 officers and men of the Regular Army, with about 500 Marines and a National Guard of 1800. The air force (soon to be increased) includes six Army squadrons, and six squadrons of Navy patrol planes. There is a well-equipped submarine base with sixteen submarines and four destroyers attached. Hawaii thus forms a secure base of operations for the United States Fleet, possessing

¹ All distances in this article are in nautical miles.

Mahan's qualifications of strength, position, and resources. Its reduction by overseas attack would be a major operation, wholly dependent on command of the sea.

But in view of the fact that the Japanese fleet is not equal to the task of obtaining such command (within our Fleet's radius of operation from Hawaii) a Japanese attack upon Hawaii is a strategical impossibility; and as Hawaii commands every trans-Pacific avenue of movement from Japan toward our Pacific coast, a serious Japanese attack thereon (*i.e.* invasion) retreats into the realm of absurdity.

The establishment of an air and submarine base (properly defended) in Alaska will help to close the northern route to Japanese advance, acting as an outpost of the main base at Hawaii. This task is now in progress.

To the southward, Panama of course is well out of reach of any Japanese attack in force. The Canal Zone is powerfully defended on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. It has a garrison of 13,000 men (which could be rapidly reinforced from the United States), an air force of seven Army squadrons and three Navy patrol squadrons, and a submarine base.

So considered, an attack on the United States proper, or on Hawaii

or Panama, is out of the question for Japan as long as she is unable to establish naval superiority in the waters in which the major operations are to take place.

The actual fighting strength of our Fleet as now constituted in Pacific waters (including vessels recently constructed on the east coast which are presently to join the Fleet) is about 50 per cent greater than the maximum force Japan could bring against it. When there is added the advantages derived from proximity to base, from the employment of shore-based aircraft, and from thorough familiarity with the geographic, hydrographic, and meteorologic conditions in the theater of operations, it is not too much to say that within the radius of our bases our superiority would be 2 to 1, and that any attempt by the Japanese Navy to enter our controlled waters would inevitably result in the loss of their Fleet without compensating advantage to them.

Major operations being thus impossible, what other forms of attack upon us would be open to Japan?

First, attacks by cruisers, armed merchant ships, and long-range submarines against our commerce, and especially against our most important maritime line of communi-

cations in the Pacific, that from Panama to the West Coast ports of continental United States. This route is theoretically well within reach of big Japanese submarines (possessing a radius of action of some 16,000 miles) operating either from the Marshalls or indeed from Japan proper. But about four-fifths of the fuel capacity of each submarine would be consumed in coming and going across the vast Pacific; translated into practical figures, this means that it would take seven submarines to keep one on cruising-station on the Panama trade-route: two on the way out, two on the way back, two refitting and refueling in a Japanese dockyard, and one on the job. Our large force of powerfully-armed 10,000-ton cruisers would make life miserable — and uncertain — for surface raiders; unless, indeed, reports that Japan is building 15,000-ton cruisers armed with six 12-inch guns and of thirty knots speed prove true. Vessels of this sort loosed on our trade routes would present a very serious problem, since our battle-ships could not catch them and our cruisers could not stand up to them.

Our trade with Japan itself, with China, the Philippines and the Dutch East Indies would of course disappear. Our trade with Australia and New Zealand would be car-

ried on at considerable risk, and here our outpost at Samoa might prove of much value as a point of support for convoys and patrolling cruisers. Even our Atlantic shipping might suffer some damage from wandering raiders, like the German *Moewe* and *Wolf* in the World War.

Air raids of a sporadic character against our coastal cities would be quite feasible. The Japanese would hardly risk their regular carriers, so necessary in a possible fleet action; but auxiliary carriers, converted from merchant ships, might do considerable damage. No serious air attacks, however, could be carried on in default of a shore base. Similarly, offensive mining — a branch of warfare for which the Japanese navy is well-equipped — would undoubtedly cause us some losses of merchant, and perhaps naval, shipping.

But when all is said and done, these are but pin pricks to a nation of the size, power, and resources of the United States. So that this is not a very attractive prospect for the Japanese statesman weighing up the final issues of peace or war. Further, the unattractive war becomes the impossible war the moment he asks, as a practical statesman must: "For these doubtful advantages, what must Japan pay?"

The answer is that, first of all, with the opening of hostilities, about 40 per cent of her import trade and one-third of her export trade would be chopped off as at a blow of a hatchet. (This is her trade with the United States and other American nations.) The economic and financial results of this curtailment on an industrial nation may be imagined; the military results would also be serious, since 80 per cent of Japan's crude petroleum imports come from the United States. Next, the "China incident" would be adversely affected by the dwindling of the stream of supplies necessary for its support, and the Chinese vastly encouraged thereby. Moreover the hesitating Russians might make up their minds that the moment had come to free themselves of the yellow menace to their Far-Eastern possessions and aspirations. The yen would take a nose-dive in the world market. Any small hope that Japan may now entertain of obtaining foreign financial aid would flicker out. Japan would be well-advanced on the road to financial, commercial, and, eventually, military ruin. And for what? For the physical possession of the Philippines, certain to become a Japanese economic province in a few years without the loss of a single Jap-

anese life; for one small island to add to the hundreds she already possesses in Micronesia; and for the satisfaction of going to war with her best customer.

The leaders of modern Japan may not do things in quite the way we approve, but no one has yet accused them of a lack of ordinary intelligence. They have not elevated their nation in seventy years from the Middle Ages to its present stature amongst the great Powers of the world by stupidity. An attack by Japan upon the United States is impossible, under the present or any immediately-foreseeable conditions, because the Japanese leaders know very well that such an attack could only bring them and all their well-thought-out and long-cherished plans for the domination of Eastern Asia to ruin. It is in Asia that their future lies; it is there that Japan must seek that empire which is her goal, and not out on the broad reaches of the Pacific. And no one knows this better than the Japanese themselves.

III

And what of an American attack on Japan? Would that have brighter prospects? Again, let us see.

Whether we start the war or not, it is reasonably certain that at the very outset—as above remarked—we shall be deprived of our bases in the Western Pacific. Hence we find ourselves confronted with the same initial difficulty as that which faces the Japanese: the factor of distance. Our fleet, based on Pearl Harbor, with a secondary base in the Aleutians, would be unable to command the waters of the Western Pacific in such a fashion as to permit the transportation of an expeditionary force for the recovery of Guam or the Philippines. Command of the sea is essential to the transport of troops. It does not have to be absolute command; but the enemy fleet must either be destroyed or it must be blockaded in harbor by a superior force, which in turn must have a base reasonably close at hand in order to maintain the blockade. Our first need, therefore, would be the extension of our sea-power westward, by the seizure of bases which would enable our fleet to exercise such command.

For this purpose we have two routes of approach: that to the northward, beginning, say, at Dutch Harbor and extending along the Aleutians to the Kuriles; and that to the southward, with the purpose of reclaiming Guam and

making that island our advanced base. The northern route is easier to protect, presents a shorter total line of communications, and would require less in the way of an expeditionary force of troops, since probably only one stepping-stone would have to be fought for. It has the disadvantage of bad weather conditions; but the final consideration against this route is the fact that, if our main advance is made here, we shall, when we are at length established on the fringe of the Sea of Okhotsk, still have no means of forcing the Japanese to deliver decisive battle save by air raids on Japan proper, since from that position we could not establish an effective blockade of the Japanese ports; while from Guam we threaten the main arteries of Japanese trade and supply.

The route we probably should take to Guam is through the Japanese mandated islands, by way of Jaluit, Ponape and Truk. These islands cover the approaches to Japan from the east and southeast. They are not supposed to be fortified, but certainly under war conditions some measures of defense would be taken, and the islands are natural air and submarine bases. To advance in this direction offers the best hope

of eventually obtaining decisive results, but the difficulties are many. First of all, we should have to assemble an expeditionary force in Hawaii (exclusive, of course, of the Hawaiian garrison) with all the necessary stores and weapons. The first and longest hop would be to Jaluit, in the Marshalls, a large lagoon surrounded by some fifty small islands and reefs, where the guns of the fleet could easily cover a landing. From Jaluit we should move on 700 miles to Ponape, a high volcanic rock with miles of shallow water close inshore. Here naval support of the landing would be much more difficult, and air support impeded by the almost continual rains. Probably special supporting ships (shallow-draft armored gunboats) would have to be built for this operation. A short hop of 350 miles from Ponape would bring us to Truk, a natural naval base consisting of a lagoon thirty-five miles in diameter, surrounded and studded by 245 islands of assorted sizes and with narrow, easily-mined entrances. At this point Japanese resistance would probably be still more formidable, since Truk is within striking distance of Guam.

With each advance, a long pause would be necessary to mop up the innumerable islands affording

bases for Japanese aircraft and submarines, to assemble the troops and supplies needed for the next hop, and the fuel and ammunition required by the transports and escorting warships. Thus, while our slow westward progress continued, a constant stream of supply vessels of all sorts would be moving back and forth along the growing line of communications from Pearl Harbor, and of course over the additional 2000 miles from Pearl Harbor to our west coast ports. Most of this shipping would have to move in convoys for defense against Japanese submarine attacks; when actually within the islands, within range of Japanese aircraft, special measures would have to be employed for its defense. Not only would an enormous amount of merchant tonnage be needed for this supply system, but also considerable numbers of destroyers and other warships for escort. Floating drydocks, and repair ships with coffer-dam equipment, would be brought forward to Truk to take care of crippled ships, which would surely fall prey to submarines if an attempt were made to tow them back to Pearl Harbor. And all the time, on and near this great line of communications, minor fighting would be going on; the skirmishing of the sea,

conducted by destroyers, submarines, aircraft, an occasional cruiser.

Once we are securely emplaced at Truk, the situation alters in character. Our next natural objective would be Guam, 650 miles away; but this, the best island of Micronesia, well-adapted for defensive fortification and possessing a first-rate harbor as well as accommodation for airdromes, is but 1350 miles from the main Japanese naval base at Yokosuka and 800 from their well-fortified advance base in the Bonin Islands. An attack on Guam (which by now would surely be strongly held by the Japanese) might therefore be taken in rear by the Japanese battle fleet, striking at its own selected moment; and would moreover of itself be an operation of a most serious character, involving large forces of troops, ships and aircraft, and the eventual necessity of a landing on a hostile shore in face of the enemy, always a desperate business. I do not think it an overstatement to assert that it would take from a year to two years of warfare, a hundred thousand troops (counting losses and replacements), a million tons of merchant shipping, 3000 airplanes, and the efforts of our entire Navy (including many new ships of special types which we now

lack, such as armored gunboats, minelayers, netlayers, boom-defense vessels, escort craft, etc.) to establish us securely in Guam. The casualties in ships and men would assuredly be heavy.

Once we are at Guam, however, we have but cleared the stage for the big show. We are now in a position to begin exercising real pressure on Japan. From Guam our cruisers and submarines can cut off her vital petroleum supplies from the Dutch East Indies; stop all her trade with Australia, New Zealand and New Guinea; and even penetrate the China Sea to interfere with her European trade. The communications of her expeditionary force in the Philippines will become precarious. Her economic conditions at home will go from bad to worse, with the practical cessation of all exports save to China, Korea, and Manchukuo. Her food supply, however, will not be seriously menaced, and she will have reserves of oil and metals sufficient for a further effort.

This effort must take the form of an attempt to relieve the intolerable pressure on her maritime communications by naval action. Her main bases will be much closer than ours to the scene of that action, and her advantages in respect of the employment of aircraft, sub-

marines, and short-radius vessels of other sorts (torpedo boats, mine-layers, etc.) will be very great; despite our battle-line superiority, Japan's case will not yet be completely hopeless.

Of course she will try to select an advantageous moment for her fleet to strike; and equally of course, that moment may not arrive for months, during which our forces will be under the constant strain and effort of maintaining the distant blockade, of protecting our heavy ships from torpedo and air attack, of constantly keeping open our tremendous lines of communications.

And even if, in the end, we win; if the Japanese quit, as is unlikely, or if their Fleet comes out and is beaten, as is somewhat more likely but by no means certain, what have we gained for all our loss and effort, for all our blood and treasure? The possession of a handful of islands, worthless economically; the retaking of the Philippines, which we have already agreed to let go; and the certainty that a new generation of Japanese, thirsting for revenge and embittered by defeat, will presently arise to challenge us anew.

As for domestic results, let us but

consider the tremendous national effort that would be required to wage such a war thousands of miles away across the Pacific, to keep up the huge stream of supplies and shipping necessary to support it; the regimentation of every department of our national life under wartime restrictions, the financial drain, the loss of foreign trade, the inevitable aftermath of panic and depression.

Our military and naval staffs know these things, have weighed them and examined them and have dinned into the ears of successive increments of Congressmen and executive officials the conclusions to be drawn therefrom. They have asked for ships and men and guns and forts, not to make war upon Japan, but to make that war impossible.

It is impossible — while we remain strong in our own waters and the Japanese in theirs.

It is impossible — while we remember that the affairs of Eastern Asia have got to be settled by the people who live there, and while the Japanese remember the same about the Western Hemisphere.

It is impossible — while ordinary common-sense endures on both sides of the Pacific.

THE SCHOOLTEACHER RACKET

By A SCHOOLTEACHER

TEACHING school is pleasant. The hours are short; the vacations are long; the pay is adequate; and the security would satisfy even a Leftist New Dealer addicted to hashish. So if you want such a job, just drop into the nearest saloon and see the politicians in the back room.

If you are not trained for teaching, that doesn't matter; somewhere close to your home there is a Board of Education which winks at details of that sort. All you need is the cupidity—and sometimes the cash—to corral votes. You do not have to reveal your college record to anybody. If you have never taken a course in physics, you are not thereby disqualified from filling a vacancy in the Physics Department. You went to college, didn't you? Okay, buddy—you can teach anything. . . .

Tobacco juice stains the floor of the School Committee room as the members sit paunchy and flabby-jowled through night-long sessions. Faces impassive, eyelids drooping, they consider "angles"

and make plans and swap political horses.

The Chairman's nephew, who majored in Spanish at the State university, can fill that Chemistry vacancy *if* the brother of Committeeman Number Two gets the Truant Officer's job. Committeeman Number Four will vote to give the fire insurance for the Junior High building to Committeeman Number Three, but Committeeman Number Three will have to agree to put in a helper for the high-school janitor. And they'll need the vote of Committeeman Number Five, too. But that's easy; Committeeman Number Five has a certain little understanding with a textbook salesman.

Here's a letter protesting that the boys who got the last three appointments were not recommended by their colleges. What the hell? Some people are cranks.

And how about the superintendent? He doesn't believe in letting a girl who majored in domestic science teach Latin. He ought to know damn well that this girl is

a must proposition, with a letter from the Governor's campaign manager. Committeeman Number Two is all for firing the superintendent, but the Chairman smiles patiently.

"Wrong way," says the Chairman. "Give him hell—sure. But then raise his pay, see?"

II

Of course, some States have laws sufficiently stringent to prevent the appointment of teachers not qualified, and though it is always easy for lawyer-politicians to get around the law, these States are fortunate. But almost everywhere there has been in the past decade a shocking decline in educational standards. To realize this, one has but to visit the schools themselves. Look at the teachers, for instance.

There was a time when teachers were harsh-voiced virgins who may have lacked common sense and a knowledge of the world, but who, accustomed to indulging their latent megalomania in the classroom, spoke boldly to municipal potentates. Did the English teachers need a new rhetoric textbook? They got it, and it was the one they wanted, not the one the cousin of the Chairman of the Board of Education wanted to sell.

Did a student "answer back"? He went home, and anyone who tried to get him into school again was acidly informed that he was an enemy of society. Was a student stupid, and did a parent send him back to school year after year in an attempt to get a diploma? Year after year he failed. They were formidable, those amazons with chalk-streaks on their faces. And in their own dull way, they could even teach.

A few of these estimable ladies are left—but they are sadly chastened titmice. They have learned to take orders and to shut up. They content themselves now with guarded comments in the classroom to students who have learned never to listen to teachers anyhow. Among themselves, and to the few recent appointees who are slightly concerned with instructing the young, they vituperate more freely. But to the world they are queer old maids with atrocious clothes who look as if they had just swallowed something bitter—as, of course, they have.

They do not send students home any longer, for they are not allowed to annoy the darling offspring of the lowliest voter. Memoranda from the principal warn them not to flunk over five per cent of their students. "Remem-

ber," the administrators tell them at their meetings, "the school exists for the children. Everyone can be made to pass. Everyone deserves a diploma."

The teachers glance at one another—those who have not learned to look out windows when administrators pontificate—but they say nothing. If the meeting is departmental, they proceed to a discussion of how to have the students fold their papers, how many questions an hour-exam should contain, and whether daily or weekly notations of the students' lack of progress should be set down on the latticed pages of the mark-books. Discussion of possible remedies for that lack of progress is *verboden*.

So much for the older teachers. The newer ones, who are helpless and hopeless, have caused the decline in morale in the schools. They may be divided into two groups.

First, the young girl-graduates. Educated at public expense, they have no interest in teaching, and are even now looking for prospective husbands. Their job is to them a stop-gap, and they do not let its details annoy them. Appointed because of political considerations which to the Board of Education seemed more practical than merit,

they are seldom versed in the subject assigned to them. They like the students, and they find it easier to amuse than to instruct.

The male teachers constitute the other group of new appointees. They never wanted to teach, and they are without training in the complex business of education. They do not know how classes ought to be conducted, and because they have contempt for their jobs, they are ashamed to admit this to some experienced person who might inform them. The security of their position is such that they feel it unnecessary to take courses designed to improve their pedagogy. And because their appointments were governed by "practical" considerations, they teach subjects about which they know little or nothing.

As for the school administrators, they have jobs, and they have wives, and so they are pompously circumspect. They get from \$2500 to \$7500 a year for performing the following duties: (a) signing slips for students whose languor or whose visceral disturbances have sent them basement-ward; (b) scaring teachers into passing more pupils; (c) making out working cards for students who leave school; (d) chaperoning the Junior Prom.

Of course, we may blame the Boards of Education — but as always in a democracy the blame lies beyond that *Vehmgericht*. What of the citizen — the voter? He is aware, perhaps, that his children come home daily to fling their textbooks to the top of the family Frigidaire and so forget them until next morning. He knows that despite this, their grades hover around the honor mark. He realizes that they graduate from the little redbrick PWA high school no wiser and far more indolent than they were before. He wails about these things. But what does he *do*?

When he passes a schoolhouse these days, his sensitive nostrils are assailed by a smell strongly reminiscent of putrefied cheese — but following the immemorial custom

of freemen in democracies, he ducks his head and scurries toward more fragrant areas. On municipal election day he enters a polling place, smiles ruefully at the unedifying array of aspirants to the Board of Education, hesitates, and finally places his cross opposite the name of some young shyster whose chief qualification for the post is that he has sat for three years in his office playing tic-tac-toe with himself. Emerging from his booth, our hypothetical but ubiquitous citizen has the smug sense of having once more asserted himself as the ultimate *imperator* of his city.

And the politicians fold their moist paws over their potbellies and permit themselves an oily smile. Democratic education marches on.



THE ANTI-FASCIST CRUSADE

BY THOMAS JEFFERSON

I am so far from believing that our reputation will be tarnished by our not having mixed in the contests of the rest of the world that, setting aside the ravings of pepper-pot politicians, of whom there are enough in every age and country, I believe it will place us high in the scale of wisdom to have preserved our country tranquil and prosperous during a contest which prostrated the honor, power, independence, laws and property of every country on the other side of the Atlantic. . . .

HOW TO RIG A BULL MARKET

BY LAWRENCE DENNIS

AFTER running us into one of the swiftest and sharpest depressions on record last summer, Mr. Roosevelt may this year pull another recovery out of his hat, by means of inflation and deficiteering. If he does, as now seems likely, he will have made history. He will have demonstrated the power of government to make the sun shine or the rain fall in the economic sphere. Mr. Hoover, the business-man's President, was liquidated by a depression he could not dispel in time for the 1932 elections: Mr. Roosevelt, the business-man's bane, is making political capital of a depression begun, and to be ended, in his Administration.

If, as we all hope, recovery comes about in the next few months, it will be caused by inflation, and it will have been engineered by Mr. Roosevelt. In these facts are headaches for our Conservatives. But one thing, at any rate, should be abundantly clear: the Conservative assumption of the past eight years that Relief deficits are emergency measures, and recovery the result

of automatic, non-political factors, is false; for it no longer makes sense to call a condition that lasts a decade "an emergency". We are now opening our ninth consecutive annual deficit, which will be four or five times as large as that of the preceding fiscal year; we have had no natural recovery since 1929. And a second conclusion exploded by recent events is that a public deficit in a depression is a compensatory device. According to this theory, during slumps governments should spend more than they collect in taxes, thus enlarging the stream of money income, and pay off the deficit in the ensuing recovery. As things have happened during the past eight years, continuous deficits are unavoidable. Let us look at the facts.

By last April, with a deficit of a mere \$1,000,000,000, we had slumped into a severe depression. So the New Dealers jazzed up the deficit of the new fiscal year, 1939, which began last July 1, to an estimated \$4,000,000,000 and a possible \$5,000,000,000. This, of course,

is what is going to bring recovery and this is what is putting the stock market up. For the fiscal year 1936—the year of Bonus payments—the net deficit, exclusive of debt retirement, was \$4,360,000,000. This deficit seems to be about right, under present conditions, for mild prosperity; later, the ante will no doubt be higher. For 1937, the deficit was cut to \$2,707,000,000. With the new social-security taxes counted as taxes, the net deficit for the last fiscal year was barely a half-billion. This small deficit, after a series of large ones, produced a sharp depression.

Conservatives make much of the fact that Mr. Roosevelt, who criticized Mr. Hoover for unsound financing, immediately embarked on this course of deficiteering himself. But they overlook entirely the fact that this policy has won Mr. Roosevelt three national elections, one substantial recovery, and numerous bull markets. And he is now repeating this self-same deficit-rescue act to the obvious enhancement of his popularity and enlargement of his power. Meanwhile the Conservatives gnash their teeth, cheering for recovery—and damning the very instruments and engineer of its achievement.

The Conservatives also delude themselves with the idea that there

are in the world today certain immutable economic laws which, in the long run, will punish the New Dealers, and Communists and Fascists as well. They think that New Dealism, Communism, and Fascism are unsound, violate economic laws, and must, in the long run, collapse. Such notions, even if true, are immaterial so far as the fate of the Conservatives is concerned. Why? Because every system known to history has ended in collapse. What satisfaction is it to the Russians of the old order, now either dead or in exile, to know that Communism violates economic laws, or that it is doomed to eventual collapse? If New Dealism lasts as long as Sovietism—twenty-one years to date—the goose of our now-prominent Conservatives will have been cooked to a golden brown.

Early this year, as prices and business indexes were plunging to lows dangerously close to those of 1932, thus wiping out half the recovery gains since 1933, Conservatives everywhere made remarks like these: “Well, it proves that Washington cannot control the business cycle.” “Economic planning and currency management have failed.” “Recovery is impossible without business confidence inspired by sound governmental pol-

icies and fair treatment of private capital.”

The New Dealers, however, like the Russian Communists, the Fascists, or the Nazis, can lose many battles and still win the war; make many mistakes and still retain power. Like the dictators, they make mistakes and suffer set-backs, but what of it? Did the starvation of millions of Russians, through the over-rapid collectivization of agriculture, lead to the collapse of the Soviet regime? Have the economic difficulties caused by Hitler's over-rapid rearmament program and universally-abhorred anti-Semitic policies weakened him or helped his victims? The long-run argument is irrelevant to those who are liquidated in the short run. Our New Dealers, despite temporary set-backs, are slowly enlarging the Socialist sector of our community life by means of creeping inflation, progressive taxation of the rich, and relentless regulation of, and competition with, Big Business. The Conservative dogs bark, but the collectivist caravan passes on.

The inflationary method continues to be the easiest and most effective instrument of New-Deal policy. Inflationary measures go through Congress like a letter

through the post. They also delight a majority of the electorate, and raise no vexatious questions of principle, now that we have eight consecutive deficit precedents. Inflation is a pleasant emulsion by which to administer progressively larger doses of what, to American taste, is still the castor-oil of Socialism. Conservatives who hope that the American electorate will vote down inflation and Socialism, merely because the American people disapprove of inflation and Socialism, are as naïve as those who expect the people to vote down poverty and war simply because they dislike poverty and war. Nothing could be more pathetic than the spectacle of our romantic Haves trapped by a realistically-led majority of Have-Nots.

As for inflation itself, our Conservatives alternate between inflationary fevers and deflationary chills. One moment they listen to monetary authorities like Professor Kemmerer, and see an inflationary debacle such as occurred in Germany in 1923. Yet such a debacle in this country is almost impossible, with the amount of inflation the New Dealers will require over the next few years—barring war. Eventually, of course, repeated deficits of the size now necessary will create a public debt

large enough to force extreme currency debasement and price inflation or a drastic capital levy. But with our chronic export surpluses, our abundance and variety of raw materials, our efficient industries, with every large country worse off than we are, with foreign hot-money flowing into this country for safety regardless of income, and with efficient monetary, banking, and economic control—with all these, the New Dealers should be able to inflate for a long time, possibly over a decade, without the slightest technical difficulties or panic.

If and when a panic finally comes, it will merely result in tighter control and a hastening of the Socialization which is what the New Dealers really desire.

Our Conservatives display the fatal intellectual weakness of confusing a dislike of social control with the idea that it is unworkable. This idea is identical with the hope of a man condemned to death that the instrument of his execution may break down—as though this would afford him anything more than a brief respite, a prolongation of his agony, and a slow and painful death instead of a swift and painless one.

II

After passing through an inflationary fever between August, 1936 and March, 1937, as reflected in the sharp commodity price-rise of that period, our befuddled Conservatives irrationally went into a deflationary chill between August, 1936, and June, 1937. And now another shot in the arm is giving them inflationary fever again. Feeling a deep nausea over the New Deal and all its works, they rationalized their flight from securities to money in the recent bear market by attributing it to lack of confidence. They were too naïve to realize that, in piling up large and unproductive cash balances, they were showing a touching, though unmerited and unrewarded, confidence in the New Dealers' irredeemable paper money. Indeed, money-hoarding by panicky Conservatives must give intelligent New Dealers one of their many good laughs at their bewildered victims. When the New Dealers had turned on a depression by turning down inflation, the Conservatives, with their usual obtuseness, had a lot of cheap fun proclaiming that the Depression was due to the economic unsoundness of the New Deal. Now that the New Dealers have turned in-

flation on again full-strength, giving us a strong dose of fiscal unsoundness, the Depression begins to lift in a wave of business confidence and a bull market. Chalk up another laugh for the New Dealers.

My opinion that the New Dealers erred by cutting down inflation is based on the highly-questionable assumption that one of their objectives was a slow and stabilized inflation rather than a series of alternating inflationary fevers and deflationary chills. As it has happened, however, their mistake and the resulting depression of 1937-1938, may not, in the end, prove as harmful to the New Dealers as many of their Conservative critics up to a few weeks ago so fondly hoped. Collapsing an inflation-caused recovery and then rescuing the country in another wave of inflation may not be bad politics, if it is not suspected that the whole thing was done deliberately for effect. I do not for one moment believe that the New Dealers planned things the way they happened in 1937; I am convinced that Messrs. Roosevelt, Eccles, and Morgenthau, in turning down inflation, sincerely, though naively, expected business expansion to continue and take up the slack. This miscalculation was

due largely to heeding deluded Conservatives who, since 1932, have been insisting that such recovery as we had was due to natural forces and would increase once deficitteering was reduced. The New Dealers are sentimentally more attached to their inconsequential and mildly-depressive reforms than to the mechanics of their inflationary technique. It must hurt them to think that their only influential contribution since 1933 has been inflation.

The Conservatives suffer from an inability to recognize that, but for governmental inflation, there would have been no end to the Depression until the entire social structure had collapsed. And this in face of the fact that they cannot attribute to the present upturn a single factor which they would call constructive. The bull-market of June began just after the President had called his Conservative big-business critics a lot of "copperheads"; just after the voting of the anti-monopoly investigation; just after a refusal by Congress to come to the aid of the railroads; and while practically all business indexes were still falling. Of course business, production, and employment will pick up as soon as people start buying, which they will do as soon as Wall Street stages a

bull market for a few weeks. But the priming force in this upturn has been a fresh dose of unorthodox government inflation.

The Conservatives still lack respect for the government's money printing-press, otherwise they would not ask where the money is coming from; how the Government is ever going to pay off its debt; what will happen when the Government can no longer sell its bonds; and what would happen if the banks should refuse to buy government bonds and start selling them, and if capital and enterprise go on a strike. They should understand by now that the Government is prepared to take over the banks and every other function which ownership and enterprise may relinquish. Such extreme governmental measures are most unlikely in the near future, however, for the excellent reason that the difficulties envisaged by the above questions are not likely to arise. Inflation, as we now see, quickly dissolves market and business pessimism. The banks have no alternative but to buy and hold government bonds, which constitute over half their earning assets, as against about 15 per cent before 1929. Investors and business men have no alternative but to carry on the best they can

under whatever regime the government allows them.

In expecting a crisis or economic difficulty to weaken or liquidate the New Deal, the Conservatives are singularly obtuse. Nothing favors New Dealism like a crisis. And nothing embarrasses the Conservatives so much. Of course, it is conceivable, though not in any near future, that a crisis of such intensity might develop that it would prove too much for the New Dealers. But that would not help the Conservatives. It would merely usher in a regime of more violent extremists.

If Washington calls an inflationary tune, the Conservatives will always help recovery, notwithstanding their professed horror of unsound finance. By helping recovery, they help Mr. Roosevelt. If Washington calls a deflationary tune and the Conservatives react appropriately by hoarding money and curtailing business and investment expenditures, Mr. Roosevelt gets a splendid opportunity to dash in on a white horse and save the country from the resulting recession. Under this set-up the Conservatives can't win.

It boils down to this: our Conservatives are not realists; the New Dealers are. And this is the day of realists — brutal realists at that.

DO YOU SUFFER FROM HEART-DISEASE?

BY WILLIAM M. KINNEY

HEART-DISEASE has now attained first rank among causes of death. As a result of this fact, which has been given such wide publicity in the lay press, cardiac neurosis is now our leading cause of disability. The chances are that most readers of this article—who are over forty—either secretly suspect, or openly proclaim, that they are sufferers from heart-disease.

Of the many symptoms which make a person, who does not have heart-disease, believe he has, palpitation is the most important. The word *palpitation* is derived from the Latin *palpitare*, meaning to throb. To *throb* means to *pulsate*, so of course the heart, technically speaking, is in a state of constant palpitation as long as there is life. In medical parlance, however, the term *palpitation* has been restricted in meaning and is used to designate only those occasions when a person is conscious of his heart-beat. The heart-beat may be entirely normal in rate, regularity, and force, yet the throbbing of the

heart, due to the heightened perception which comes with emotion, enters consciousness during emotional states. Thus palpitation is not a condition due primarily to an altered heart-action, but is a result usually of nervous influence.

Under ordinary circumstances the average person realizes that his cardiac palpitation is due to his emotional state, and pays no attention to it. The young lover is too much concerned with other matters to be bothered by the throbbing of his heart. But in certain circumstances, usually when there is a chronic condition of fear, or marked nervous fatigue, the palpitation of the heart becomes distressing, and the victim's attention becomes fixed exclusively upon it. This is particularly true in chronic-anxiety states, because the emotion is likely to be repressed and the patient is aware only of its effects.

Let us take for example a business man who finds himself, in middle-age, financially insecure. He goes to bed after a particularly fatiguing day. Unable to sleep, he

lies tossing and turning from one position to another. There is a feeling of tension and pressure in his head and he begins to wonder about his blood-pressure. His heart thumps alarmingly, at times with such force that it seems to shake the bed with every beat. Night after night goes by in this fashion, and presently a new fear is added to those already present. He has heart-disease. The victim becomes a pulse-feeler. Many times during the day he sits with his fingers on his pulse and dolefully regards the rotation of the second-hand of his watch. If his pulse seems too slow he is alarmed; if it seems too fast he is alarmed; and if it seems normal he is not reassured but must feel it again in a short while to see if it has become too fast or too slow in the interim.

His sleep is disturbed and in the morning he awakens as tired as when he went to bed. To relieve his fatigue he drinks more than the usual amount of coffee. He is nervous and jumpy and begins to count his cigarette consumption in packages. His heart, constantly stimulated by the increasing nervous tension and the excessive consumption of coffee and tobacco, is becoming irritable. At times its action is irregular. At such times, due to its irritability, it does not

wait for a normal interval after the preceding beat, but contracts too soon. These beats are known medically as premature systoles. Because they occur when the heart is still fatigued from the preceding contraction and before it has had time to relax and fill with a normal volume of blood, the beat is weak. Therefore the patient is not aware of it nor is he able to feel a pulsation at the wrist. A premature beat completely replaces the beat which normally would occur a short time later. There is, however, no alteration of the fundamental rhythm of the heart, and following a premature beat there is an abnormally long pause, for the next beat occurs when it would normally have occurred had no abnormal beat preceded it. During this long pause the heart has time to fill with a greater than normal volume of blood and consequently the succeeding beat is more forceful than usual.

The patient's sensations during this sequence of events is that his heart has stopped completely, and then seems to turn over in his chest and resume beating. This is exceedingly alarming. He feels certain that for a moment, which of course seemed much longer than it actually was, his heart stopped completely. He now knows be-

yond a shadow of a doubt that he has a serious heart-disease, and it is but a matter of time until one of the pauses in his heart-action becomes indefinitely extended and he will suffer the fate that is so universally considered by laymen to befall every victim of heart disease; he "may drop dead any minute".

II

Curiously enough the victim of the situation I have described gets considerable satisfaction from his melancholy plight. The human mind is capable of performing the most astounding tricks without the owner's being aware of them. The business man confronted with a problem he cannot solve sees a means of escape. How a "flight into illness" will help his situation he does not, or cannot, consider. The woman of fading charms sees a means of commanding attention and sympathy from a husband whose attentions are apt to wander. The mother of an adored son, who forsakes her for a vulgar wench who has nothing to offer in place of a pure and unselfish mother love but blatant sex appeal, sees a means of binding him to her through his sense of filial duty to a mother who is mortally ill.

At various stages in this development of a cardiac neurosis the patient seeks medical attention, not for a diagnosis usually, but to see what can be done about his condition. In his own mind there is little doubt about the diagnosis. He merely wishes confirmation and treatment. What are his chances of securing competent medical attention? Let Dr. Richard C. Cabot of Harvard University, one of America's foremost authorities on heart-disease supply the answer. In the opening chapter of his book, *Facts On The Heart*, he says, "Most 'Heart-Disease' is imaginary . . . fourteen out of eighteen successive patients sent to me by their physicians quite recently for supposed heart-disease, had, in my opinion, perfectly sound hearts". In the closing chapter is the startling statement that "most diagnoses of heart-disease, whether made by physicians or suspected by patients, are in my opinion wrong".

Of course it makes little difference whether an out-and-out cardiac neurotic gets into the hands of a charlatan, a man who is merely ignorant, or a conscientious and competent diagnostician; the outcome in any event will be the same. A man in either of the first two classes will confirm the pa-

tient's diagnosis to his complete satisfaction. A man in the latter class will merely delay him in securing the confirmation he desires.

There is a large group of patients, however, who, when they first enter the physician's office, are not yet confirmed neurotics. Through fear and ignorance they have conceived the notion that they are suffering from heart-disease. If such a patient gets into the hands of a competent physician his fears will be quickly dissipated and he will leave the office cured. But once a patient has been told on his first visit to a physician he has heart-disease, or even given the impression that the physician thinks he has heart-disease, nothing under high heaven will undo the damage that has been done. He will be a cardiac invalid to the day of his death, if he lives to be a hundred. There are a few exceptions to this rule, but not many. The patient may appear to believe the competent cardiologist when he hears the opinion that there is nothing wrong with his heart, but sooner or later the old fear returns and he begins making it a practice to shop around from one physician to another, thinking to find more truth in a number of opinions than in one. Eventually he will find a physician who confirms the opin-

ion of the first, and his last doubt is swept away.

It is this class of patients, and they are becoming constantly more numerous, that provides such a fertile field for the charlatans. There are plenty of these latter within the medical profession as well as without. I know many physicians whose practices consist largely in treating neurotic patients for organic diseases they do not possess. These patients live, of course, as long as anyone, and their physicians secure reputations for being skilled therapists much more easily than their associates who are conscientious and treat only those who are actually ill and therefore much more apt to die.

It is a curious phenomenon that I have often observed in my daily practice that those who have nothing wrong with them are the most ready to believe that they are on the brink of the grave; and that those who have serious organic pathology are the least willing to believe it. The conscious mind is much less accurate in its observations and conclusions than the subconscious mind, which will allow anything to enter consciousness that will soften one's contact with harsh reality, and will not allow one willingly to believe anything

that will cause pain. The neurotic who consciously believes he has heart-disease but subconsciously knows that he has not, likes to dramatize himself and is in the same state of mind as the person, who, though he abhors the thought of actually dying, gets a great deal of pleasure from visualizing himself cold in his coffin surrounded by grieving friends and relatives who have come to realize, alas too late, what a noble and splendid fellow he was.

III

I have said that, in large part at least, the responsibility for the almost universal fear of heart-disease and the belief on the part of so many people that they have it, must be placed upon the widespread publicity given to vital statistics, which, if taken at their face value, show that there has been, in recent years, an enormous increase in the incidence of heart-disease. Yet in spite of these statistics, whether or not the increase is real or only apparent is still a very actively-debated question in medical circles. Erudite statisticians have made many complex calculations to answer the question but have not yet done so to everyone's satisfaction.

There are a number of factors which make conclusions drawn from vital statistics subject to grave errors and not the least important of these are the diagnostic ability and honesty of the men who sign death certificates. I have already quoted Dr. Cabot's opinion of the ability of the average doctor to diagnose heart-disease. His conclusions find adequate support in my own experience. If it be true that the general practitioner is so inept at diagnosing cardiac disease while the patient is alive, why assume that he becomes a paragon of scientific accuracy when he takes pen in hand to sign a death certificate? To my mind there is but one possible conclusion; vital statistics are a mass of inaccurate data compiled largely by incompetent observers.

Doctors share with the rest of the human race a simian imitateness, and therefore find it the line of least resistance to do as others do. The diagnosis of heart-disease is one so commonly made that when there is any doubt about the condition present it seems quite natural to call it heart-disease. A record clerk in a Chicago hospital once told me that many times physicians wrote "heart-disease" on the hospital record as the cause of death when they openly admitted that they did not know

what had caused the patient's death, or in some instances did not want the true cause of death to become a matter of record.

Whatever the truth may be, it is certain that the frequency of heart-disease is nowhere near so great as most people believe, and you may rest assured that if you fear you have heart-disease because of palpitation or some other symptom directly referable to the heart, your chances of having it are small indeed. Heart-disease is like insanity: the more you worry about it the less likely you are to have it.

The person who actually has heart-disease is apt to complain of symptoms due to the disordered function of some other organ, the brain, lungs, stomach, bowels, liver, or kidneys. A heart that is

failing is unable to circulate the blood in sufficient volume at the necessary speed. The other organs of the body therefore suffer from congestion, lack of oxygen and food, and their functions are depressed. The diseased heart palpitates only after some unusual exertion, and the palpitation is due to the laboring of a weakened organ trying to move a minute volume of blood which is beyond its capacity. If your heart palpitates only when you are nervous, tired or suffering from some intense emotion or when you are sitting quietly, or resting quietly in bed, the chances are a great deal less that you have heart disease, than that you will be struck by an automobile on your way to the doctor's office.



BUREAUCRACY-ON-THE-POTOMAC

BY FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

The State! Whatever the State saith is a lie; whatever it hath is theft; all is counterfeit in it, the gnawing, sanguinary, insatiate monster. It even bites with stolen teeth. Its very bowels are counterfeit.

NEW YORKERS CAN'T SPEAK ENGLISH

BY HUGH MORRISON

ENGLISH as a spoken language is almost as dead in New York as Latin is in Rome. Its place has been taken by New Yorkese, a jargon which is spoken with variations by Gothamites of all classes, including the holders of university chairs and park benches. This *ersatz* language resembles English in every respect save pronunciation. Phonetically it is a grotesque parody. Hearing it for the first time is an unpleasant experience, comparable to one's first look at a cubist statue.

There is a popular belief that the speech of the well-educated is superior to that of the ignorant. Hence the brainy of the Big Town assume without question that their speech is excellent. Actually it would be difficult to find a San Francisco truck driver who mispronounces a fraction of the words commonly mispronounced by the average New York university graduate. The way the proud possessors of sheepskins hack away at what they call English would make a Wyoming sheep-herder

wince. Manhattanites claim that New Yorkese is a dialect of the English language. If it is, then Neapolitans speak Latin, Mexicans converse in Aztec, and residents of Miami discuss the New Deal in Seminole. It is time for those who speak it to learn that New Yorkese is not English, nor is it what H. L. Mencken would call the American language; it is a language by itself.

The New York language has many dialects of its own, the most famous of which is called the "Bowery" dialect. This is a misnomer since it is heard all over town. It is by no means confined to the illiterate, as is commonly believed. Recently Fordham University announced that many of its students said *erl boiner* for *oil burner*. One of the most famous professors of philosophy in the city (name on request) says *foist* as often as any stevedore. A soap-box orator will mount his platform and say, *Fella woikus! Eighty yeahs ago Koll Mox said, Woikus of de woild, unite! Yez have nuttin' to lose but yuh chains! Now is de*

tahm to ogganize and t'row out dose smot graftus lahk Mayuh Hague, de lore of Joiz' Cee, and let de woikus run de guu'ment. And his hearers will nod in agreement. This is, of course, the worst variety of New Yorkese. The majority of the city's inhabitants can pronounce the sounds of *th* and *er* and laugh at those who cannot. They are blissfully unaware of their own phonetic failings, which make their speech as ludicrous to out-of-town people as the *dese-and-dose* pronunciation is to them.

I was once waiting my turn in a barber shop where municipal affairs were being discussed in Italo-New Yorkese. One barber said, *De muni-sipple aut'orities can't do nuttin' now wit' Dewey in de cidy becauss de're scairt stiff of him.* The fellow waiting next to me said with an air of disgust, *These Guineas were boahn in New Yawk and talk like they come from It'ly. If you ax me, I think w'en a man was boahn in Amurica he ought to talk like an Amurican.*

When I was working as a shipping clerk in a New York concern, a girl who worked in the advertising department would occasionally come in to talk business. She would say: *We have a hunnert calenduhs to send to a customuh in Calcutter, Indier, some tahm in the neah*

fucha. Also, the boss said not to send any moah advuhtisin' mattuh to Chiner until the woah is ovuh. An' we have a hunt'n fifty memo pads to go to eye-thuh Coster Reecker or El Salvadoah. At times I felt like throwing my typewriter at her. I have not exaggerated her faults a bit, but have given her the benefit of the doubt in many cases. Her speech was of neither the best nor the worst variety of New Yorkese, but about average. Still, I cannot honestly call it English. When I ventured to discuss the matter with the young lady, she was actually astonished. She said that she was always at the head of her English classes in high school and that in all her four years not one of her teachers had ever found fault with her "English".

That New Yorkese is a young, growing language is shown by its unsettled phonetic system. If you study French or Spanish or Italian your teacher will tell you that the *o* is a vowel, the *t* is a consonant, and the *h* is a mute letter, but if you try to learn New Yorkese you can get no such definite information as to the letter *r*. The Manhattanites simply cannot agree whether it is a vowel, a consonant, or a mute letter. Some pronounce it all the time, some leave it out as often as the Bostonians, and the rest pronounce

it half the time and omit it the other half. Those of the third category seem to be in the majority. One will say *gardner* one minute, *gahdner* the next, then *gardnuh*, and finally *gahdnuh*. Most Gothamites agree that there really should be an *r* sound somewhere in the language, but cannot decide what letter to give it to. People of all three categories tend to put in an occasional *r* where it doesn't belong. I once heard a lecture by a university instructor in history in which he referred to *Havaner Hobba*. Such a man could hardly get a job in a college outside New York; he could get one easily, however, in a vaudeville show. Most New Yorkers pronounce the last syllable of a word ending in the sound of long Italian *a* to rhyme with *roar*. They say *droar* for *draw*, *lore* for *law*, and call the foremost Irish man of letters *B'wahd Shore*.

Even school teachers, who teach New Yorkese but erroneously believe they are teaching English, do not agree as to the classification of the *r*. I have had people tell me that they always thought it was a consonant until school teachers, who thought it was a vowel, made their lives miserable until they began to say *heah* and *befoah*. Also I have had others tell me solemnly that they had *nevuuh huhd* of any *such*

thing as leavin' out the lettuh ah. And think they prove it when they say *soder wotta* for *soda water*.

The pronunciation of the New Yorkese long *i* is also disputed. Many have a tendency to pronounce it as short Italian *a* in English. They say *ahs* for *eyes*, *tahm* for *time*, and *lahk* for *like*. The contraction *I'll* is usually pronounced *owl*. A few give *ing* its full sound but the great majority either drop the *g* or grossly exaggerate it. The habit of dropping the *g* is by no means confined to New York, but New York is the only place where people who consider themselves cultured and refined treat the letter like a hot potato. The final *g* is heard much more frequently in a Colorado mining camp than in Barnard College.

In New Yorkese the *h* is not dropped all the time, as in Cockney, but is systematically omitted before the sound of long *u*. Thus the Gothamites say *uge*, *uman*, *umane*, *umid*, *umiliate*, *umor*, and so on ad nauseam. The words *humble* and *homage* are also pronounced in true Cockney fashion. This is one rule of Manhattan phonetics over which there is no dispute. University dons adhere to it just as strictly as do traffic cops.

The sound of *wh* is as obsolete in

New Yorkese as the sound of *gh* in English. If you write out a sentence such as, "William Wheeler was wheeling a one-wheeled wheelbarrow on the wharf when he saw a white whale in a whirlpool in the water", and then give it to a graduate of Columbia University to read, he will say: *William W'eeeler was w'eeelin' a one-w'eeled w'eelbarrow on the w'orff w'en he sore a w'ite w'ale in a w'irlpool in the waw-tuh*. Then he will look at you curiously and ask, *Wot's the pernt?*

It is a curious fact that most of the negroes in New York can pronounce the sound of *wh*, while the white people cannot. The colored people keep very much to themselves and their speech has not yet been contaminated by the white trash. On the whole their speech is much superior to that of the whites. Harlem is one part of the Big Town in which the English language is still spoken.

II

So far I have mentioned only the differences between the systems of pronunciation of New Yorkese and English. There are, of course, scores of other words, supposed to be the same in both lingoes, which New Yorkers so mutilate that English-speaking people can hardly

recognize them. These words are mispronounced without a set rule or formula. Certain words are mispronounced by the ignorant everywhere, so, of course, we cannot condemn the ignoramuses of New Amsterdam for following a universal custom. We can, however, condemn the well-educated for mispronouncing words which are pronounced correctly by the very yokels they despise.

I have never met a graduate of New York University who knew how to pronounce the word *whoop*, nor a Montana cowpuncher who didn't. I doubt the existence of a graduate of City College who knows how to pronounce *exit*, or of an Idaho lumberjack who doesn't. I honestly believe that one could search Fordham from cellar to attic without finding a student who knew how to pronounce *cigarette*, and that one could ransack the asylums for the feeble-minded in the State of Washington without finding an inmate who didn't. A candidate for dog-catcher in any hick town in Kansas will begin his campaign speeches with the formula *ladies and gentlemen*, but the Ph. D's of Bagdad-on-the-Subway salute their audiences with *ladies and gentlemen*, or *ladies and gempmen*.

It is evident that New Yorkers

have a kind of mental complex which renders them unable to distinguish between good speech and bad. The members of the Board of Examiners have observed thousands of schoolteachers and have come to the conclusion that most errors of speech are the result of a kind of deafness or inaccuracy in listening to one's own, or another's spoken language. From time to time the newspapers print articles to the effect that hundreds of applicants for positions as schoolteachers are being rejected on account of their atrocious speech. It seems incredible and tragic that a person who had enough brains to be otherwise eligible should spend all the time and money necessary to go through a normal school only to find upon graduation that he had a disqualifying speech defect. He does not notice his phonetic failings because he is speech deaf. His teachers do not notice them either, because, I suspect, they are also speech deaf.

There are, of course, New Yorkers who try to speak better "English" than the masses and try to make their speech "distinctive". Of these the vast majority keep on mangling the language as much as before, start saying *eye-ther* and *nigh-ther* for *either* and *neither*,

and let it go at that. Those who adopt these Cockneyisms are seldom of the educated classes. Usually they are ignoramuses who find themselves, for various reasons, obliged to speak in public — salesmen, radio announcers, and shop-girls. They are not in the least discouraged when told that saying *eye-ther* for *either* is like saying *eye-ch* for *each*.

To those of us who have sensitive ears, and are resident but not native New Yorkers, its speech is the town's most unpleasant feature. We can endure the din of the El, but the mysterious sounds that sally forth from the native larynxes give us ear-aches. To avoid them and to overcome their effects, many of us go to heroic lengths. I often hear one of my fellow sufferers say that he was never particularly fond of moving pictures until he came to the Big Town; but now he goes to them frequently — avoiding the pictures in which the actors are Limeys or ex-Broadway stars because of their pansy pronunciations — solely for the pleasure of hearing decent English instead of bastard New Yorkese for a change. We agree that even the speech of the cast of an "Our Gang" comedy is very soothing after a day spent listening to the infernal jargon of New York.

WE ARE NOT POOR

BY ETHEL AMBLER HUNTER

IN A COUNTRY where everyone worries frenziedly about the Depression, like a puppy with a bone too big for it, and where the doleful refrain of "these hard times" echoes from every street corner and bridge table, it might be well to look our poverty in the face and see of what it is made. If it bids fair to be permanent — an "equalitarian destitution", as William Church Osborn has called it — we must, I think, plan how we can manage to endure it.

Nothing is more demoralizing to the character of a nation or an individual than self-pity; and right now this country seems to be drenched in self-pity. The fact, however, that a large part of our population is considerably better off than the entire populations of most other countries seems to suggest that all is not yet lost, that perhaps we are not so unfortunate as we think. At least it is true that we have no need for many of the things we crave — some of them are actually bad for us — and, in comparison with other peoples and

other times, we certainly are not poor. Of course I except those on the very edges of the pit: the wandering youths thumbing their way around the country from one job to another; the inmates of cellars and flop-houses; the desperate fringes of society. But the great majority of the 130,000,000 of us, especially those who were well off in 1929 when dividends were large and salaries generous, are not poor — not in the true sense of the word, which is destitution.

We *are* poor in the sense of want — we want everything the other fellow has, and if we cannot have it we loudly cry poverty. Poverty is the prevailing excuse for every evasion of debt and duty, used when hard, unpleasant work is offered or when the time comes to contribute to funds for churches, community chests, and hospitals. For example, a young couple in our neighborhood recently asked their landlady to reduce the rent of their house. The landlady was old, ill, and wholly dependent upon the rents of her two small properties;

her life was restricted to constant penny-pinching for food and fuel. The young people thought they were having a hard time, too. They just couldn't make their salary go around, they explained, and the only possible place to reduce expenses was the rent. They couldn't even afford to have a baby. (This last was calculated to reduce the old lady to a mush of sentimental generosity.) But the old lady remembered the parties, sometimes two or three a week, which required a lot of expensive liquor; the stream of delivery boys from the butcher, grocer, and florist; the new car, bought long before the old one was shabby; the week-end trips, and the new fur coat. It seemed to her that the economy might well be made elsewhere than in the rent.

Another young couple nearby are also among the so-called poor. The husband has had no luck as a salesman and the young wife supports them, for the most part, by secretarial work. They owe nearly everyone in town, and recently allowed the bank to take their house, which by that time was perhaps half paid for. Yet they have a car (a good one), send their boy to summer camp, take trips during the wife's vacation, and dress well. Certainly they are not poor, and

had they belonged to the "poor" of twenty or thirty years ago they would have gone without the things I have mentioned rather than owe money or lose their home. They would have cut the pattern according to the cloth, and gone without the things outside the design.

Then there are Allan and Mary, an older couple with children growing up, a strong taste for gay life, and, alas, a small income. At least it seems small to them; they assert with wry smiles that they are the "new" poor, by which they mean the "high" poor. They need so many things, including modish clothes, cocktail parties, and their lovely furnishings. Mary says it costs her eight dollars a month to keep her hair decent, and — would you believe it! — Betty, now in high school, must have her hair done too. All the other girls do. The fact that soap and water and a scrupulously clean hairbrush will keep the hair neat and shining seems to be forgotten; but it is true, as many other generations of women with handsome hair have proven.

On Saturday afternoons in our town, scout leaders find it impossible to organize hikes to places of historical interest, even with refreshments offered free: for Satur-

day is Movie Day for the children, and this includes the children of those on Relief who, like their parents, attend with surprising regularity. When reminded of the educational and healthful features of the hike, parents reply that their youngsters are following a serial and could not possibly miss a chapter. Out-of-work adults, bitter and discouraged, may need the anodyne of the movies, as social workers say, but why spend money to stupefy children with such tiring and unrewarding excitements?

The truth of the matter is that the movies are just another of the feverish extravagances stimulated by contemporary high-pressure salesmanship, which is also responsible for the great demand for glossy new cars, elegant refrigerators, abundant cosmetics, and similar luxuries-not-necessities for which our "poor" pay a staggering yearly bill. Since 1932 the American public has decreased its gifts for support of churches by 30 per cent, for general benevolences 29 per cent, for community chests 24 per cent, and colleges 18 per cent. At the same time, however, expenditures for the luxuries mentioned above, and for theaters, cigarettes, automobiles, liquor, jewelry, radios, and other dispensables, have soared by 25 per cent to as much

as 317 per cent; and much of this money was spent by our "poor" people. But how much regard for thrift, self-reliance, and quiet happiness can you expect to find among these poor when they see the more fortunate plunge into installment buying, restless gadding about, and extravagances of all sorts? The poor of our time have been nurtured on the heady doctrine that "We're as good as they are, any day."

II

Years ago, when Americans had fewer luxuries and often ran short of necessities, we were not, strange to say, nearly so self-conscious about poverty. When I was a child, few thought they were poor, although today everyone in that same neighborhood—my own family among them—would be so labeled. There's no denying that my family and neighbors were poor so far as material possessions went. We had no electric or gas lights, no refrigerator, not even an ice-filled one. Perishables were kept in the cellar or down the well. Clothes were washed on Monday in two wooden tubs in the kitchen; then the tubs were put away until Saturday, when they were used for the weekly bath. Of course we had

no bathroom! Today I smile at the thought of how dreadful everyone thinks the little houses out back must have been! We had, at most, two pairs of shoes, a best pair and an everyday pair. We had a coat; not a raincoat or a winter coat or a sport coat or a fur coat—just a coat. Some of us did have a school coat as well as a best one, but not many were so lucky.

My father sometimes had no work for months at a time. The shoe factory where he lasted shoes was more seasonal than factories are today, and being laid off was the expected, though nonetheless dreaded, thing. There was coal to buy, and food and taxes and interest on the mortgage and sometimes a doctor's bill. Yet we never felt poor. We expected to get along and did. Paying the bills was planned far ahead, and paid they were, let the chips fall where they would. Nothing was bought that we were not sure we could pay for, and consequently merchants trusted us. I can remember feeling very rich and luxurious when I had an egg for breakfast, and oranges were a treat saved for sickness and Christmas stockings.

Quite a contrast, these memories, to a scene I saw in the A & P store yesterday! A pleasant-faced,

elderly woman stood haggling over a small bit of meat with the embarrassed clerk. She wore a lovely summer suit, modish shoes, and one of those knowing little hats *not* from the bargain basement. Yet she explained in an anxious voice that she must get the most she could for the money. Times were so hard that she had dismissed one of the maids and she would do without her trip South. The butcher looked at the stingy cut of meat. "Shall I carry it out to the car?" he asked her blandly. She colored a little and then picked up the package.

I would not be as poor as that pathetic creature for all the world!

One thing which, I believe, made us happier when I was young was that almost forgotten commodity, "elbow-grease". When applied with skill it gave to personality a polish strongly resembling the much-admired "poise" of today. After doing a good job we could look anyone in the eye with pride, or face any situation with interest and courage. But our wise-cracking, forlorn recipients of welfare haven't work; not of a kind they will consider. Most of them dodge wood-cutting, ditch-digging, and snow-shoveling, though they can offer a nifty tap-dance, can croon, or run adding machines. Their

daughters are adept, too, at these devices for easy earning, and refuse housework or clerking with uplifted, helpless hands.

Using oil lamps isn't being poor, nor is going without white coats or cars or permanents. Living in a cellar is, and so is insufficient milk for the baby, or the responsibility for sick, indigent parents. The greatest calamity, however, is *feeling* poor—the beaten spirit, the petty stinginess to keep up a good outside show.

A sturdy sense of well-being *can* be cultivated and the will-to-do restored. I know that the modern diet does not include the rough foods of my youth. But there are still apples; there are still milk and

eggs, sunshine and fresh air, soap and water, books, friends, fields to walk in, streams to fish in, woods to roam. If we could only find another god than the “good car”; other happiness than that found in costly and exhausting amusements and expensive (or expensive-looking) clothes.

If we can't go back to something simpler and more wholesome, or forward to something finer, then the whole race of Americans as the world thinks of them—the American of robust humor, courage, and the ability to turn in casually a tremendous amount of excellent work—will have vanished from the earth. Then, indeed, we shall be poor.



IT WAS ALWAYS SO

BY ERNEST RENAN

Institutions grounded on Communism always have brilliant beginnings, for Communism involves a great exaltation; but they decline rapidly, for Communism is in conflict with human nature.

DON'T BE A WRITER

BY LAURENCE BELL

THANKS to the diligence of such students as the Drs. Ellis, Freud, Stekel, Jung, *et al.*, the human mentality has been so well explored and charted in recent years that it now contains few mysteries, even in its more startling aberrations. The most callow freshman in a fresh-water college can pigeonhole the more obvious eccentricities, and any reasonably-competent M.D. can make a diagnosis of those more subtle. Indeed, the country is fairly overrun with psychologists of the abnormal, both professional and dilettante. Yet one form of madness continues to baffle professors and amateurs alike—that which impels its victims to take up the craft of writing.

It is, if course, overwhelmingly evident that literary aspiration, with possibly one exception in a thousand cases, is a form of mental illness for which there is no cure save death. This fact warrants an exhaustive scientific study, under the direction of some such philanthropic foundation as the

Rockefeller, the Carnegie, or the Guggenheim; but the philanthropies probably have their hands full, so perhaps I can be of service to my fellow men by offering a lay analysis of this dread curse. For those already stricken there is small hope; but by enumerating some of the perils awaiting the others, I may perhaps persuade some of the less foolish that any alternative occupation, however dull and arduous and unprofitable, is likely to be a wiser choice.

Let us say that you are young, in your early twenties, and for one of any number of reasons believe yourself to be possessed of sufficient literary talent to make writing your livelihood. We shall assume you have a facility for forming grammatical sentences from well-chosen words, and (though the chances of its truth are about 1000-to-1) that you have something genuinely interesting and important to say. We shall assume further that you have considered the other professions to which you might apply your efforts (here

again the odds are formidable that you have done no such thing), and that you accordingly are convinced that the field of literature offers the richest and easiest-obtainable rewards. You are vaguely aware of the fact that there is considerable competition, but you believe yourself to be gifted with ideas that will put your competitors out of the running.

True enough, the three or four short stories you have already submitted to the magazines have bounced back with rejection slips, but you are satisfied that these rejections came as a result of (a) your not living in New York City; (b) the editor not knowing you personally; (c) the editor being an incompetent ass, holding his job through pull, and incapable of knowing a good story when he sees one; or (d) your manuscript not being read at all.

These grievances date from time beyond reach of memory, record, or tradition; and, in substance, comprise a vast percentage of every editor's mail. They are the stereotyped alibis of frustrated geniuses at all times and everywhere. But since the mere statement of these beliefs seemingly fails to prove their absurdity, consider them one by one: In the first place, it makes no earthly difference where you

live if you have anything on the ball; the Messrs. Branch Cabell and William Faulkner, to name two outstanding writers, have *never* lived in New York. Secondly, most editors feel that they know too many people as it is, particularly authors; dealing with the craft is to them a task that is part of life's unpleasantness. Their assistants, moreover, are carefully selected and trained to weed out the appalling mass of junk that arrives in every mail; when they *do* unearth something worthwhile, you may be certain that they fall upon it with great joy. The third grievance may be dismissed with the observation that if the editor doesn't know his trade, he soon gets the bounce. Fourth and last, the readers aforesaid follow the same procedure in reading unsolicited manuscripts that you follow in reading stories in print: if the first several paragraphs don't lift you, do you read on? I doubt it.

These facts, as I have pointed out, should be obvious even to the vainest of unsuccessful writers, but if you hobnob with the species you will hear them denied every day. About three years ago, a group of the so-called proletarian writers banded themselves together in what they called a "writers' union", their shillboleth being

based on the four fundamental complaints listed above. As part of the campaign they waged, before being taken *en masse* into the Federal Writers' Project, they called upon various editors in New York, and solemnly demanded that additional readers be hired (from their own ranks, of course) to insure proper treatment of their as yet unwritten masterpieces.

II

So much for the prime fallacies of the amateur writer's credo. My object in offering a rebuttal is not to set you right on these matters, for, could you recognize these truths, you could likewise recognize others which make it unnecessary to write this article. For example, the belief, previously stated, that the profession of writing will make you fat and prosperous with little effort. Now it may be that you have found writing easy, that the words flow from your mind; but have you sold a story, or even received editorial encouragement? If you have, of course, nothing you may learn here will be helpful—once having received a check for one of your efforts, or even seen your name in print, you are beyond all earthly assistance. You will go on to the end of your

days, wearing out pencils and typewriters, and if you never print another line, you will always attribute your failure to some sort of cosmic frame-up. But if you have not yet scored, there may be a chance of salvation. The road to successful authorship—and by “successful” I mean selling enough of your product to make even a moderate living—is long and hard. To become self-sustaining you will have to form the habit of writing every day, or at least at regular periods, whether you feel like it or not. As Somerset Maugham testifies in recapitulating his thirty-odd years in the business:¹

It is evident that no professional writer can afford only to write when he feels like it. If he waits until he is in the mood, till he has the inspiration as he says, he waits indefinitely and ends by producing little or nothing. . . . You cannot write well or much (and I venture the opinion that you cannot write well unless you write much) unless you form a habit. . . .

This has been expressed much more succinctly by William Faulkner, who said “I write when the spirit moves me, and the spirit moves me every day”.

Thus it will be best for you to consider writing, if you plan to make a living at it, as a business; or, more cold-bloodedly, as busi-

¹ *The Summing Up*, by W. Somerset Maugham. Doubleday, Doran.

ness and job combined. It is a business in which you must do all the work, and if you don't work you most assuredly will not eat. Moreover, unless and until you establish yourself as a recognized author, you are not likely to eat in proportion to your labors, being in exactly the same fix as a piece-worker who is paid only for work which measures up to a required standard. Again, writing is a job that requires a relentless fixedness of purpose. It means completely isolating yourself from all other contacts while you do your stint. There will be times, of course, when such privacy will be a rare pleasure, but there will be others when you will practically have to chain yourself to your desk to keep plugging; when there are a hundred things you'd rather do than look at a sheet of blank paper. There will be days, too, when you will sit at your typewriter cudgeling your brain for words that will not come; it will be then that you realize the awfulness of what you've let yourself in for. And when you've written your heart into something that "can't miss", only to have it bounce back—a rejection instead of the check you so desperately need—you will indeed curse the day you decided to be a writer.

Thus far, my remarks have been based on the assumption that you fancy yourself a talented short-story writer. If you think the prospects brighter in the field of the novel, your delusions are all the more pitiable. Every year thousands of people actually sweat out novels, and every big publishing house is flooded with manuscripts of every shape, size, and description, 3000 being an average season's haul. Out of this appalling mass perhaps a dozen will be worth publishing. Of this dozen, at least ten will be forgotten the day after publication; their authors will realize perhaps \$250 in advanced royalties. The other two out of the dozen will perhaps sell out the first edition of 1500 copies, less a hundred or so review copies, at the published price, usually \$2, of which the author will realize 10 per cent—the handsome total of \$280 for a task that has taken from six months to two years to complete. One of these two may warrant a second printing, but even so, it will have to sell 5000 copies before the author makes a thousand dollars. The blessings of the New Deal have not fallen upon the book trade, and any novel selling as many as 10,000 copies today is considered a best seller.

As for non-fiction, the work is even harder and the rewards more uncertain. In writing, say, a popular biography, the speediest hack spends twice as much time in research as he does in actual writing. A serious biography or history may consume several years — Dr. Douglas Freeman spent twenty-odd years and thousands of dollars on his monumental *Life of Robert E. Lee* — and in the end sells perhaps 2000 copies. To write travel books, one must first travel, and unless you are a Rover Boy with a rich father, this is pretty hard. Poetry and criticism are labors of love, or, if you prefer, a downright waste of time.

The same conditions are true of the magazine-article field, for unless you can turn out such pieces quickly, accurately, and readably (which is a fair substitute for brilliance), you won't last until the water gets hot. There is plenty of money to be made in free-lance article-writing, of course, but the competition is terrific; every field has its specialists, and every magazine has its "names", who are either on the staff or get preference on assignments. Until you acquire this "name", or at least establish yourself as a competent and reliable journalist, there is only an outside chance of obtaining even a

tentative order for an article; and if you knock the piece out and send it in cold, the chances are that some speedier chap will have beaten you to the sale.

III

This, then, is the romantic pursuit of the literary life, as I and the great majority of my writing acquaintances have found it. I have purposely omitted mention of such snares as newspaper work, the efficacy of which as a stepping stone to serious writing has been admirably disproved by such experts as Stanley Walker (*vide* THE MERCURY, December, 1935); and the radio and moving pictures, on the assumption that you know better than to tackle these highly-specialized fields as a raw beginner. If you still are bent on breaking into the "writing game" — and you probably are — permit me to offer a few words of advice. You will find them good, though they come from a none-too-successful hack.

By all means, don't come to New York City to live, even if you have plenty of money to keep going on until you click. There are too many distractions to permit your getting anything done, and the farther you travel to get there, the harder you'll find it to adjust your-

self to the town. The much-ballyhooed "cultural advantages" of New York City are so much bunk, particularly if you have no money. You will no doubt find a definitely higher I.Q. among the people of your own town, wherever it is, than you'll find among the New Yorkers with whom you, as a struggling unknown, become acquainted.

Get yourself a job, apply yourself to it with all your ability, and consider it as your probable life work; do your writing at home, if you must write, and don't let it interfere with your job. Don't throw up your job if you write something that sells. This may seem a silly admonition, but the woods are full of hungry people who have done that very thing. Avoid arty groups, and particularly other writers. They will do you nothing but harm. If you wish seriously to write, you will have to do the job yourself. Nobody ever wrote anything at a literary cocktail party.

You will be wise, indeed, if you submit something of your work to a reputable literary agent. I don't mean the enclose-one-dollar-with-your-manuscript-for-expert-criticism lads, most of them are vultures feeding upon gullible tyros, but any one of a dozen that an editor will be glad to recommend.

If the agent doesn't think your work is worth handling, he will tell you so, and you may be well-nigh certain that he is right. If the agent encourages you, give yourself a year to make definite progress, *in your spare time*. If you fail, break yourself of the habit of writing. This you won't find difficult; just don't write, and don't even think about writing. Get married, join the country club, go to Yellowstone Park in a trailer, or take to drink. And bear in mind that Babbitts eat three times a day.

In conclusion, I offer the prediction that not one of those to whom this paper is addressed will benefit from it in the least. You will dismiss me as an embittered hack, and continue to chase the *ignis fatuus* of Successful Authorship. One of you out of every thousand, as I have said, will pull out in time. A scant dozen of you may develop enough knowledge of the craft to support yourselves, after a fashion, at press agency, ghost writing, book reviewing, or similar menial laborings in the sweatshops of literature. The rest of you will stumble blindly on, wasting your time and ruining your health, persisting to your last breath that though the world be cold to your genius, Posterity will hail you and deify your bones.

MUSSOLINI'S COAT OF MANY COLORS

BY GAUDENS MEGARO

BENITO MUSSOLINI: *Imagine an Italy in which thirty-six million citizens should all think in the same way, as though their brains were cast in the same mold, and you would have. . .*

PRESIDENT OF THE COURT: *An insane asylum.*

MUSSOLINI: *Or rather, the kingdom of boredom and imbecility. The King himself, faced by thirty-six million monarchists, would feel the need of insisting on the existence of a republican. . . . It is necessary that beside those who say no there be those who say yes; that beside those who exalt the army there be those who decry it; and that beside those who acclaim bourgeois society there be those who wish to destroy it. . . . Unanimity, uniformity mean . . . death. Gentlemen of the jury, pay homage to . . . a very great principle: the principle of liberty!*

Does the reader think he is reading fiction? This is not a joke, or a parody. These are the actual words of Benito Mussolini, spoken on

April 1, 1914, before the Court of Assizes of Milan, as he vindicated his right to censure the "massacre" of workmen by the police, and defended himself against the charge of inciting to crime and vilifying the army. Although everyone is familiar with Mussolini's exaltation of nationalism, militarism, the nobility of war, religion, the Catholic virtues, and the power of the state, few realize the intensity of his earlier defamation of all these things. In short, his bitter hatred of everything he stands for now.

When Mussolini's father, Alessandro, died in 1910, the future *Duce* of Italian Fascism wrote that, though his father had left him no worldly goods, he had bequeathed to him a spiritual treasure: the Socialist Idea. From early youth, Benito championed this idea in innumerable articles and speeches, and with all the more vigor since he aspired to be the *Duce* of the Italian Socialists. This ambition he achieved in fact when he became the editor-in-chief

of their powerful daily paper, *Avanti!*

Mussolini first became well-known to his Socialist comrades for his pronounced anti-religious and atheistic principles. "God does not exist", asserted the man who later invoked God to help him rule Fascist Italy. The god of all theological schools was a monstrosity born of the ignorance of mankind. Religion was absurd, immoral, a psychopathic phenomenon, the servant of the Capitalist class, the enemy of every movement for human emancipation and progress. He had no more use for the "Protestant *canaille*" and the "despicable Protestant clergy" than he had for the "Black" Catholics, for that "big corpse", the Catholic Church, the "divine bank" which was already on the road to bankruptcy, and for the Vatican, that "den of intolerance and of a gang of robbers". Yet in the current Spanish Civil War, the Fascist *Duce* has allied himself with virtually the same forces he once excoriated.

In the same class with religion as a mask for the rapacious bourgeoisie were patriotism and nationalism. As a young man, Mussolini evaded compulsory military-service by using a falsified passport, and argued that an infallible

means of destroying the infamous militarist constraint was desertion. He was certain that the time was "now past when the caprice of a monarch can drive peoples to slaughter". War in Europe was impossible, and if there should appear a "crazy megalomaniac, the proletariat would no longer lend itself, as a docile herd, to the holocaust". The future conqueror of Ethiopia used to gloat over the defeat of the Italians by the Ethiopians at Adowa in 1896: "Italy needed bread and she was bled white by an army and a navy. She needed to regenerate herself completely and she was plunged into colonial enterprises". The army was an "organized school of criminality". Militarism was a "monstrous polyp with a thousand viscous tentacles that sucks unceasingly the blood and best energies of peoples!"

To the creator of nationalistic Fascism, the pre-war Italian nationalists, the real precursors of his movement, were "dandies, pimps and bluffers". Nationalism was an exotic flower, budding in Italian hot-houses, but once exposed to the sun and the winds certain to lose its fragrance. Mussolini's ardent aim was to ruin the Bastille of bourgeois authority by destroying all respect for its economic, mili-

tary, political, and religious institutions. The Fatherland was a lying artifice, a patriotic Moloch, and the national flag was a "rag to be planted on a dunghill". In case of war, Socialists had only one duty: war must be the signal for a general strike, for an insurrection, and for civil war at home. And Mussolini proceeded to do his duty by agitating against the imperialist Turco-Italian War, sure that "millions of workers . . . are *instinctively* opposed to the African colonial undertakings. The slaughter of Adowa is still very much alive in the memory of the people. . . . The Italian proletariat must *keep itself ready to effectuate the general strike*". So extreme was his anti-war agitation that he had to serve five months in prison, an experience which did not mitigate, but gave new strength, to his anti-patriotic propaganda, for international militarism was continuing to "celebrate its orgies of destruction and death. Every day that passes, the huge pyramid of lives that have been sacrificed rears its bloody summit upon which Mars stands waiting with his unsated and contorted mouth in an infernal grin. . . . The Fatherland is a spook . . . a spook like God. . . . Let us show that the Fatherland does *not* exist, just as God does not

exist; that one and the other are two great fictions, two formidable, conventional lies". As long as the Turco-Italian war continued, he exclaimed, "I shall not desist from my anti-war campaign. I want to create an anti-war conscience that is lacking today."

By virtue of a royal decoration, Mussolini is now a "cousin" of King Victor Emmanuel, and he regards the monarchy as one of the pillars of his Fascist state. But King Victor as well as other monarchs once got their share of his virulent language. Kaiser William II was "lousy William, the Emperor of the Germans, the verbose and already ridiculous Attila of the twentieth century" who "delights in bragging"; King Edward VII of England was a libertine; Czar Nicholas II of Russia was the "hangman of the Neva" whose hands were red with blood. Queen Mother Margherita of Italy was that "bigot of a queen"; and the poor famished *canaille* had to pay the civil list to King Victor, four-foot-eleven-inches tall, a numismatist, whose wife was beautiful and inviting. "Oh, by God, he deserves 107 lire a minute!" The King was a citizen useless by definition and, like all other men, subject to the tragic and comic extravaganzas of destiny; hence the attempt to as-

sassinate him in 1912 was an accident to be expected in a King's profession. "Why this hysterical, excessive sensibility when it is a question of crowned heads?" But after he became the Fascist *Duce*, Mussolini established the death penalty in cases involving the assassination of, or attempt to assassinate, the King and, of course, himself.

A few years before he became the State, Benito asserted: "Down with the State in all its forms and incarnations. . . . To us . . . there remains . . . only the religion, at present absurd, but always consoling, of Anarchy!"

II

Are these glaring doctrinal and moral somersaults of Mussolini intelligible? Yes, if it is borne in mind that he cannot pay even lip-service to ideas unless he can utilize them as instruments to satiate his yearning for personal power. He is a Twentieth-Century *condottière*, consumed by the lust for dominion over men, ready to embrace any cause so long as this lust can be satisfied. With faith in nothing but himself, he has individualized everything in his lifetime, including, of course, both Socialism and Fascism. It makes lit-

tle difference to him what his flag is so long as he is its standard-bearer. He is a master in the manipulation and exploitation of sentiments, the prey of a boundless ambition — whetted early in his life by the extraordinary power he wielded in the Socialist movement, but still far from being satisfied despite his enormous personal success in many fields. He has had the singular fortune to be the *Duce* of both revolutionary Socialism and extreme-reactionary Fascism. Is it any wonder that he has wished to make his own life his masterpiece? A little more than a year before the Fascist March on Rome, he spoke of himself as a leader who leads, not a leader who follows, adding that he would always be on the watch "especially when the changing wind swells the sails of my destiny". He freely admitted that he was possessed by the mania to be *someone*: "It inflames, gnaws and consumes me, like a physical malady. I want to make a mark on history with my will, like a lion with his claws."

Perhaps the record of no statesman in history offers as many illogical, inconsistent, and contradictory elements, and yet such inflexible faith in his own capacity for leadership, as that of Mussolini. Obviously, since his dominant pas-

sion is his pursuit of personal power, his apostasy does not disconcert him in the least. Mussolini the Socialist was as imperious, fiery, dictatorial, and disdainful as is Mussolini the Fascist. He has always been refractory to any law, to any norm tending to restrict his personal will.

Italy, patriotism, the national interest — all are shibboleths to him just as Socialism, the revolution, and human welfare were shibboleths to him; in all cases, shibboleths which he has exploited and continues to exploit to his own advantage with superlative effective-

ness. Few are the men in history who have seen their consuming lust for power as effectually realized as the *Duce*. No one has more effectively described Mussolini than Mussolini himself when, at the age of twenty-seven, he uttered the words: "Within me, I recognize no one superior to myself."

This whole picture of Benito's coat of many colors may be typified by his proclamation on March 23, 1919, the day he founded the Fascist movement:

"We are positively against every form of dictatorship".



MESSAGE TO THE BRAIN TRUST

BY GEORGE WASHINGTON

Government is not reason, it is not eloquence — it is force! Like fire it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master; never for a moment should it be left to irresponsible action.

THE WALL STREET EXPLOSION MYSTERY

BY EDMUND GILLIGAN

TOWARD high noon of September 16, 1920, an old, rusty-brown wagon, drawn by a bay horse, came slowly westward on Wall Street. On the seat of the wagon sat a man who, if he is alive today, keeps a secret in his heart that has no equal in our time.

The bells began to toll the hour of twelve when the driver pulled his horse to the curb in front of the Assay Building, directly across the street from the office of J. P. Morgan and Company. The driver jumped down from his seat, flung the reins across the horse's back, and vanished. Perhaps he stepped into a subway, or there may have been a motor car waiting for him farther down the street. In any event, he left that place swiftly, not tarrying to see the effect of his arrival. It would be a marvelous flight of the imagination to determine what thoughts were in his insane, cruel mind when he took that last, backward glance at his horse and wagon and went away.

The bells ceased. At once the noon-day throngs appeared: bro-

kers and bankers, clerks and girls, all sauntering along Wall Street toward the luncheon places. There was only a minute left. In that time, hundreds of men and women glanced at the horse and wagon, an unusual sight in the financial community; indeed, a forbidden sight, according to a city ordinance which forbade the approach of such a rig without due and difficult permission. Among those who looked at the horse and wagon were many who were never to see again, and some who would never even breathe again. And there were hundreds of others who looked at the wagon, and others who said they saw the driver. Later, when sharp observation might have provided the one great clue, these casual observers could not produce an accurate account. A natural thing, of course, because their thoughts were on luncheon and not on death.

At one minute past twelve an enormous bomb in the wagon exploded. A mass of saffron gas appeared where the horse and wagon

had been. The Street shuddered under the blow. A vast sound roared, and the saffron gas made a flashing, burning change into a pillar of brown smoke. A green flame whirled, spouted upward, then flattened into a disc-like shape that whirled faster and faster and expanded until it covered a space a hundred feet in diameter. Out of this inferno the explosion hurled a hail of metal fragments, hurled them with such strength and velocity that they maimed and killed men and women, crushed their skulls, broke their limbs. Awnings twelve stories above the Street burst into flames. Windows half a mile away shattered, and the gentle sound of the tinkling glass, falling and slipping from sill to ledge and thence to the pavement, came like music into that absolute silence. The gas cloud vanished; the shambles appeared.

Not a living soul was there, except the dying and the wounded. A hoof of the horse lay in a pool of blood, and the pool sparkled in the sunshine. The dead girls lay in grotesque positions. One stood against another, seeming arm in arm, and then they both fell dead. Many men, and parts of men, lay in a windrow around the smoking remains of horse and wagon. There were boys there, too; mes-

sengers carrying great fortunes in securities. One boy lay in an idle pose, as if his lazy feet had failed him in the sun and a few feet away his envelope was found, still clutched in his tight hand. In the Morgan office, Thomas Joyce, the chief clerk, had fallen dead upon his desk amid a litter of plaster and shattered glass.

The throngs had been thrown back. Hundreds of thousands stood transfixed in the by-ways, not daring to move, striving to pierce the mystery of that vast, shaking explosion. Those who had been near the horse and wagon, and had escaped, now huddled in the doorways or rushed speechless into offices near by. No man dared to approach the shambles. Thus the silence was created and held for a long time, a silence in which moaning was the only flaw.

A girl among the dying raised her blonde head and screamed. Those who heard it said that it was an awful, dying cry. It seemed to be a signal, for at once the backward-flowing throngs turned and flowed forward, ran toward the horse and wagon and the shambles. It was a sight full of wonder. Men and women, eyes bulging and mouths wide open, ran and even stumbled, in some cases, over the bent knees of the dead. One man

looked down into a distorted face and fainted. Instantly six or seven women near him, screaming in their hysterics, pitched forward or fell backward, fainting, too. Tinkling loudly in an unbroken, jangling song, the window-glass kept pouring down on them.

Soon that scene of loneliness was again crowded. The roar of the explosion was almost equaled by the sound of many voices shouting the same question, screaming it: "What was it? What happened?" Thousands rushed from offices. The throng became a mob, turning, pushing, fighting its way toward that one bloody point. Fear of another explosion never seemed to strike them. They were seized with a savage desire to look with their own eyes at the shambles and to learn what had happened.

Into this mob the police and the firemen entered, making way for many ambulances. Surgeons fought shoulder-to-shoulder with the cursing cops to make a pathway to the dead. The throng fell back. The ambulance men counted thirty dead, and threw sheets over them. Two hundred injured persons lay there. The stench of the gas was sickening. Platoon after platoon of police marched in; then came the Federal troops. The ambulances rolled away with their

burdens. All the offices were closed, and clerks and brokers hurried home. The Stock Exchange closed. The way was cleared for the work of the detectives, who stared at the horse's hoof in the pool and began a long, useless pondering, a bitter, fruitless task.

II

When the history of crankage is written, the Wall Street explosion must take first place in it; for it seemed that all the cranks in the country had been at a fever point then and, it was proved, some of them had even predicted the explosion. One had named the day. But those unbalanced, merry minds, which seemed to find pleasure in an image of Wall Street destroyed, could not be forced to give up one intelligible word. From the beginning of the investigation to its end (which may not have been reached yet), all the insane men who confessed or who had warned their friends to keep out of the Street were put aside as worthless reservoirs of worthless fancies. Red-baiters accused every Radical in prison and out; Sacco and Vanzetti were not spared. Even the Irish patriots, who were working against the tyranny of England, came to grief at the

hands of certain remarkable theorists, especially certain *World* reporters, who apparently had been taking lessons at a correspondence school for detectives. Rewards of about \$100,000 were posted.

The hunt began before the blood was mopped up. What was the evidence? The fragments of the horse; a few spokes of a wheel, splinters, an axle, a strap of charred leather, and a handful of odds and ends. The statements of eye-witnesses, as usual, were not worth a tinker's dam. The only hope of revenge for society lay in the hooves and bits of flesh and in the metal objects that had blown like shrapnel through the noon-day throng. These metal objects, it was found, were window weights. Five hundred pounds of them were gathered there, there and blocks away. And in the nature of these weights the police saw proof that the explosion was not an accident; because the weights had been carefully cut up into small pieces so that they would accomplish the purpose the wagoner had in mind: kill and maim.

The detectives laid all their material before a number of skilled veterinaries, wagon builders, and blacksmiths. They labored intensely for many hours and at the end produced a description of the

horse, its shoes, the wagon and its harness. In the police circulars it read as follows: Horse — dark bay mare, fifteen and three-quarters hands, fifteen years, about 1000 pounds, long mane and stubby foretop, clipped a month before; scars on left shoulder and white hairs on forehead. Shoes — hind shoes marked JHU and NOA, about half an inch apart; front shoes had pads, circle in center reading "Niagara Hoof Pad Co., BISON, Buffalo, N. Y. Harness — single set of heavy wagon harness, old and worn and frequently repaired; turret rings originally of brass, one broken; the other silver-mounted and evidently belonging originally to coach harness. Wagon — single top, capacity one and one-half tons, red running-gear, striped black with fine white lines. Three-foot wheels on front; four-and-one-half on back, of Sarvant patent. Body — five-and-a-half feet high, fifty-three inches wide, about eight feet from ground to top of wagon.

The detectives visited nearly five thousand stables along the Atlantic seaboard, and it was not long before the police reported that they had found the actual maker of the shoes, an Italian, whose shop was on Elizabeth Street, New York. He remembered that the day be-

fore the explosion a man had driven such a horse and wagon into the shop and had asked him to tighten a shoe. The blacksmith had suggested that a new pair was needed and his visitor, seeming rather distressed, asked in a nervous manner how long this would take. He was told that twenty minutes would be long enough. The pair of shoes was made and nailed to the hooves. The smith even described a cleft in one of the hooves which was found in a hoof taken from the shambles. He then described the customer, said he was apparently a Sicilian, and he even noted that his hands were white and soft. All this seemed promising at the time, yet it led to nothing. The clue was just another blank.

The number of clues that came into the hands of the investigators was enormous. The tenacity with which the detectives stuck to their jobs was something remarkable. Of course, there were confessions. Every now and then a lunatic, in Denmark, China, or in some prison, declared that he had done the job and gave all the details. But not one could prove his story. And even today, when the crime has long since been considered unfinished business by the police, a mention of it in the newspapers,

when its anniversary comes, is enough to start a new rumor and bring new clues, worthless as ever.

It is too late now for a solution. Eighteen years have passed since the poor old plug took his last trot down Wall Street. Many times since then the police have checked over the whole story, on the chance that a fresh examination will turn up the one great detail overlooked before. Sometimes, when a new man has done a brilliant turn on an important case, they send him down to the Corner, as the scene of the explosion is now generally known. He hears again the story of the explosion, studies the types of wounds, examines the few relics of horse and wagon and window weights, and studies. But he always gives up in the end. Some of the new students of the crime insist that the man never left the wagon, that he was dissolved in that thrust of gas. Others believe, for no good reason at all, that he was merely a madman, working alone, and that he may be alive today. They are the optimists who are hoping that some day, in a time of remorse or in the time of death, he will confess.

Except for these vague hopes, the Wall Street explosion is as complete and baffling a mystery as it was five minutes after it took place.

HOME FOR MOSES

A Story

BY ROYDEN STEWART

THROUGH the co-operation of Mr. Rockefeller and God, there is a playground back of Mr. Rockefeller's Riverside Church and sometimes children play in it. I used to walk by there between classes at Columbia last summer and often stopped to watch the kids from the gate in the brick wall. I didn't know anyone in New York and there is nothing friendlier than the sight of kids playing, especially small kids. But what first made me notice the playground was the fact that it was paved. Pavement on a playground surprised me.

That shows I didn't know much about New York, because it turns out all the playgrounds here are paved. Since I met Moses Kleinman, the little half-Jewish boy with the braced leg, this playground paving has interested me, even worried me. No one seems able to give me a satisfactory reason for it, and I still don't know whether it's a good thing or a bad thing. For Moses Kleinman, I mean. Now

that Moses has gone to his new home and Mr. Rockefeller is no longer a factor in his life (though you can't ever be sure of that, in America) and I'm anxious, and a little afraid, to go back home to Indiana, where playgrounds and prejudices are of different proportions and different construction from those in New York.

I asked a sociology professor about the paving. He gave me that wary look that is any scholar's reaction to something not reported on in Juggergramm's thesis as printed in some Journal, Volume Roman Numeral. Then he said that possibly it was to condition children for life in the city. In the best crypto-epigrammatic tradition.

I asked Moses Kleinman, too, that first day, but in a different way because he was only eight and couldn't be expected to give an indirect answer. I asked him if he wouldn't rather play on the grass in Riverside Park. I told him that out in Indiana you couldn't get

kids on pavement when there was grass around, or even just dirt. He said you had to cross the Drive, and the park was all slopey, and the cops would chase you. The playground was level, of course, and there were all kinds of game equipment (maybe Mr. Rockefeller provided it, maybe God) but it seemed to me the pavement was pretty rough on a kid like Moses when he fell, like this time.

The boys were playing dart tennis, and Moses seemed to be enjoying it although the other boys were bigger than he and pretty kid-brutal to him because he couldn't jump sideways on account of the brace, or move quickly in any direction. He saw the ball coming over the net and he made a brave lunge, but another boy ran in front of him and slapped the ball. Moses tried to stop, but the brace wouldn't give, and he went down on his side with that braced leg doubled under him. His face was twisted and dead white.

No supervisor was there and the other boys stood back and looked uncertain, so I went in and picked him up and carried him to the gate. He could stand when I put him down, but he hung his head and leaned against the wall and cried.

"Come on; buck up, partner," I said. "You're not hurt."

"My pants," he said. He pointed to a hole the brace had snagged. The material was pretty well worn already. "I haven't got any more," he said.

He had black hair, this kid, and a nose that was already living up to the vaudeville jokes. That's what made it so startling when he looked up and rubbed the tears out of his eyes and I saw that his eyes were bright blue. It was his left leg that was braced; it was thinner than the right and maybe a little shorter. I didn't ask whether it was paralysis or an injury. I did ask him the dumb questions adults always ask kids: his name, and age, and where he lived, and what grade he was in at school. He said he lived on LaSalle Street but they used to live on Seventy-ninth but that was before his daddy died and that was a long time ago.

"He got sick," Moses said, "and then he died."

We walked up to the Drive and I bought him an ice cream bar from a truck, and his troubles disappeared. We sat on a bench and talked until time for my next class.

After that, when he saw me at the gate, Moses would smile and wave, and come over to talk with me as soon as he could stop a game. In fact, he wasn't often in a game because the other boys didn't like

him in the way. We would walk to the park, neither of us mentioning that it wasn't safe for him to cross the Drive alone; and ice cream bars got to be part of my diet.

Moses had some friends, he said, in the second grade and, though it was only July, he was looking forward to the fall when they would be together in the third grade because his friends didn't come to the Riverside playground. There were Joe Pagoni and a colored boy, Henry Herrera; they mostly didn't mind Moses' being slow. And Sammy Bronner had a clubfoot himself. Only Sammy wouldn't be at school any more because he'd been caught doing something wrong, and when They found out he was an orphan and was living with his uncle, They had taken him to a Home. Sammy had been scared when They took him, though he was ten years old. Sure, the playground at school was paved.

I hadn't much experience in prolonged conversation with a kid but I did my best. I told him about playing ball and fishing and swimming in Indiana (like an ass forgetting that crippled leg, but it didn't phase the kid) and all the grass there was without any cops around. When I mentioned Indiana, Moses said:

"My mamma knows about Indiana!"

"Really?" I said. "Did your mother used to live in Indiana?"

He looked up quickly then, frowning. "Mamma says she never, *never* lived in Indiana," he said. "But she knows about it, but she won't tell me."

His mamma was very beautiful, he said, with the prettiest yellow hair, but sometimes she got awful tired working in the store. It was a ten-cent store on 125th Street, up in Harlem.

Without wanting to, I knew most of the story then. A blonde girl from Indiana who'd married a Kleinman and would rather work in a ten-cent store in Harlem than even remember Indiana.

You know what prejudice is? You must have lived in the Middle West. In New York and even in New England people have to meet reality half-way because reality is several millions strong and doing the business. Out beyond Cleveland it's different. Not "restricted" apartment houses or "Chr." in the Help Wanted ads; almost silent, but deadlier. "Personally, Benny is a fine fellow." And "I suppose it's all right in the Lions Club, we really can't draw any lines." And "My dear, I almost had to invite her, I felt rather funny, she was so

grateful, you know those people always are." And "Simply unbelievable . . . always such a nice girl . . . and her parents, you know . . . yes, but to *marry* him. . . ." Head shaking and lip compression to make a Back-Bayer look a rollicking Liberal. Deadlier because it is implicit and undindexed, like a Miltonian line that everyone feels sure is from the Bible or the Constitution. I say, you must have *lived* there. Not Indiana alone, maybe not the Middle West alone; speak of what you know.

So that was the story of Moses Kleinman's mother. And I could see it must be Moses' story now, that Moses must be the reason for not going back now that her husband was dead. For the dime store and LaSalle Street and a crippled boy, half-Jewish, playing, when the other boys would let him, on the playground Mr. Rockefeller had paved so thoroughly.

II

Knowing that much, I didn't want to know more because even then I had a hunch that knowing innermost things about someone else's life makes you responsible for that life to some extent. And being sure that even a small part of Moses'

life was too heavy for me, I began to try to withdraw, to keep the conversation impersonal, something you can't do with a kid any more than you can with a woman. I began not to have time to go to the park, but I still stopped at the playground gate and bought ice cream bars because I knew he looked for me. Then I'd feel like a worm when he fell on the playground pavement, which was often, or startled me with a flash of those blue eyes (they were big and wide-set, Nordic or Aryan or what-say-you, Corporal).

Cowardice, you see. Ignorance, too. For it isn't knowledge, but affection, love, that makes us share lives. And once the love, even a stray tag of love—braced leg doubled on pavement, ice cream bar in the park, my mamma knows about Indiana—there's no dodging the sharing, no real dodging. I learned that for certain the day Moses' mother died.

I had bought an ice cream bar on the Drive and had come down to the gate to signal Moses. Just as I stepped under the arch I was knocked against the wall by a big hatless Italian who scrambled on into the yard without seeing me.

"Moses Kleinman!" he screamed. "Where is Moses Kleinman?"

Moses came from somewhere at

as near a run as the brace would allow, but before he reached the Italian the man screamed again. "Your mother's been killed, Moses! Moses, your mother's dead!"

The fellow was excited, and he was a Latin, but still it was unpardonable. The words hit the kid in the face and stopped him in his tracks so suddenly that the brace almost threw him down again. It was the first time I ever saw complete terror in a child's face, so complete that he couldn't cry for minutes. But after a second, Moses came on. Came on to me, not to the Italian. So what could I do but interfere when the man grabbed Moses' hand and started pulling him along? I picked the boy up and told the Italian I'd carry him.

But I couldn't keep the fellow from spilling all the details while we ran and walked to LaSalle Street. The woman had been hit by a truck at the 125th Street and Amsterdam intersection and she had lived only a few minutes. The police had booked the driver, but everybody said it wasn't his fault, that it looked as if she'd deliberately stepped in front of the truck. And everybody knew she'd been laid off at the store a couple weeks ago and the superintendent's wife — this Italian — was the building

superintendent — had heard her crying in her room after she'd sent Moses to the playground.

Crying had come to Moses, too, before we reached LaSalle Street, a weak terrified crying. He shuddered against my shoulder and asked where his mamma was, and if she wasn't home wouldn't I please take him to where she was, please. I didn't say anything because I didn't know anything to say.

LaSalle is a two-block street. It begins at the intersection of Morningside Avenue and 125th Street, where Harlem washes up against Morningside Heights, and it ends at Broadway, miles above where Broadway means Broadway. It exists because 125th Street, in crossing the Island from east to west, staggers five blocks to the right and short streets are needed to take up the slack. There couldn't be any other reason for LaSalle Street, though it does pretty well at pretending it isn't a slum.

The building was the oldest and shabbiest in the street, brick that had been painted, and the paint now coming loose in long scabs. Twenty or thirty people chattering around the iron stoop went quiet all at once and stood back to let us pass. The superintendent's fat wife came running out the door,

crying in Italian and reaching out to take Moses, but he tightened his arm on my neck, and I carried him on in to the room on the first floor where the woman led us.

There was a young patrolman there, uncomfortable as you might expect. The room was what you should expect, too, but a little shocking at that: a sink and a stove in one end, an iron bed in the other end beneath the window, and precious little else. Though you couldn't help noticing that the cretonne curtains over the shelves were bright and new, and the rug was clean right down to the holes. On the dresser was a photograph of a man that I saw at once was Moses' father.

Just the picture, and the room, and the young policeman, and the people chattering outside, and the boy sobbing on my shoulder, sobbing slower now and asking for his mother only in the way we all ask for something we know can't be had though it's the one thing in the world we must have. Too quick for a child to realize death? But this was Moses Kleinman, and this was LaSalle Street, and this was New York.

He wriggled a little, and I set him down. He walked over to a chair, the braced leg dragging, and huddled in it as much as you

can huddle in a plain kitchen chair.

The policeman wiped his face, though he wasn't sweating. "The sergeant'll be here in a few minutes," he said. "Likely he'll bring a Welfare Worker to look after the kid. I phoned about him."

"A Welfare Worker?" I said.

"Sure," the policeman said. "A woman. They're trained to do this kind of thing. Civil Service, you know. I tried to get some information, but nobody knows nothing except her husband is dead years back and they never heard her speak of any folks. The Welfare'll take care of the kid all right. Do you know anything about 'em, Mister?"

"No," I said. "I don't know anything."

The policeman looked at Moses there in the chair with the braced leg hanging stiff, and he mopped his face again. "Them damned magpies outside," he said. "Stay with the kid a minute, will you?" He went out fast.

"I know," Moses said. "I know. They'll take me to the Home." He sat up straight and his blue eyes got wide. "Sammy Bronner went to the Home and he was scared."

I didn't know anything to say then, either.

"Moses," I said, "where do your

grandpa and grandma live? In Indiana?"

"I don't have any grandpa and grandma," Moses said. "Mamma said I didn't."

I guess it was because the room was so clean otherwise that I noticed the crumpled paper just under the bed. I picked it up and smoothed it out. It was a letter and the envelope the letter had come in. I would have stopped then if it hadn't been for the postmark, but there it was staring me in the face: "Cate City, Indiana." Now Cate City is only an hour's drive from Evansville and I've been there several times. And didn't I have as much right as the police? Or more? The writing was easy to read, each letter was thin and tight-lipped and erect. The date was five days before.

My Dear Ruth: I am writing you this letter because your father has asked me to do so. He says you will not believe that I am willing to let you come back here unless I write it myself. So I want you to understand that I am writing because your father wants me to. Your father is getting old and sometimes I think a little childish and he was really touched by your letter. I have to humor him in many ways lately.

Now Ruth, I know you have always blamed me for the decision your father made nine years ago, but you are wrong in this also. I was not even married to your father at the time you brought such great sorrow to him. Of

course he did consult me about it because he wanted to be fair, but I told him it was not my place to say anything, but I could only say how I would feel toward an ungrateful child of my own if I had one, remembering what the Bible says about such a thing being sharper than a serpent's tooth. But I am willing to let bygones be bygones and as I told your father, I will even try to forget the hateful things you said to me when I was only trying to do my Christian duty by your father when he had no helpmeet. He never speaks of it, but I am sure he has wished many times, as I daresay you have too, that you had been reasonable and let me arrange for an annulment as I could have done through Judge Chatmore who was a trustee of our church. Good Christian soul, he has gone to his reward now.

Your father and I have discussed this through many hours and have prayed over it, and we have decided to make a place for you in our home as you asked. In view of your misfortunes, we believe you are now ready to come in a true Christian spirit of humility. We will receive the child also. I understand it is marked in some way. Your father agrees with me that you will want to be self-supporting and he has already arranged for a position in Mr. Byers' office. It is filing, I think he said, and I hope you will be able to do it since your father has arranged. You and the child will have your own room in our home.

Now this is something your father does not fully realize. People here have not forgotten why you left and who the child's father was. With you bringing the child back, they are not going to forget, but of course there is nothing for you to do but bring him and we will do our Christian duty by him. I know how stubborn you are, but I think you should change your

name to something plain and American when you come back. It will be better for you and the child in the long run and it would show consideration for your father. Perhaps as I said to your father, some of the stubbornness has gone out of you by now.

The bus fare will be \$28 for you and the child, as I suppose you will have to pay half-fare for him. If it is necessary, your father is willing to advance this until you are working again. Please let us know immediately as I will have to do a good bit of rearranging in the house.

Yours truly,
Christabel Anderson
(Mrs. George T. Anderson).

III

It made me a little sick. I knew why the letter had been crumpled. Crumpled and thrown away. Crumpled and smoothed and crumpled again a dozen times in the last three days. It made another photograph for the room, clearer and sharper than the one on the dresser. Clear and sharp photograph of Christabel (Mrs. George T.) Anderson of Cate City, Indiana. I could see George T., too, but he was vague and blurred, as probably he'd always been.

It wasn't quite that simple, though. Because I could see Cate City, too, a lovely little Indiana town where the shade trees are tall and everybody has a lawn and not all the streets are paved; and plenty

of open country within five minutes' walk. I could see all that, and I could see Moses Kleinman, eight years old, with Nordic eyes, sitting there on the straight chair, sitting there and waiting, a little sunlight coming through the window and reflecting from the brace on his leg.

And then I heard new voices in the hall, talking with the superintendent's wife; and I put the letter into my pocket.

The sergeant and the Welfare Worker came into the room, filling the room but not belonging in it, alien to the bright cretonne and the clean shabby rug and the boy in the chair never taking his eyes from me. The sergeant was tall and the barking kind. He asked who I was, and poked about the room a few minutes, and said to the woman that it was pretty definite that there were no close relatives and he was making his report that way and the rest was her job. He went out, and the woman raised an eyebrow at me that asked why I didn't go.

But I didn't move, so she turned to Moses. "Ah, so this is the little man," she said. "Wouldn't you like to come with me?"

She said it very brightly, Civil Service brightly.

Moses didn't answer. He looked at me. Looked at me as if he knew

everything was up to me. It was.

Have you ever been God's deputy? God's, not Mr. Rockefeller's. Here was Moses Kleinman and here was Civil Service that would take him to a Home. And there, out in Cate City, was Christabel (Mrs. George T.) Anderson who was ready to do her Christian duty. And in my pocket was the letter, with its Christian message.

"You're taking this boy to some sort of public Home?" I said.

She frowned to let me know I shouldn't have said it before the kid. "Ah, he may be placed for adoption," she said, but she wasn't a good liar because she couldn't keep her eyes from going to the steel on Moses' leg.

I went on being inane. "This Home," I said, "it's a pretty good place, isn't it?"

The Civil Service chin came up. "The Home is very well administered," she said. "The endeavor is always to maintain a family at-

mosphere, and the children are well taken care of in every way. Practically a new building and a large playground."

"Playground?" I said. "With modern equipment, I suppose?"

"Ah, yes," she said. "There have been generous donations. Swings and seesaws and baseball, all sorts of things."

"And pavement," I said. "Of course the playground is paved?"

She smiled brightly. "Of course," she said.

I didn't have time to think. The patrolman came in. "The sergeant sent a car for you," he said to the woman. "Are you ready to go?"

My hand, coming out of my pocket, weighed ten pounds. "I found this letter on the floor," I said. "These people will do their Christian duty."

Besides, I'll be going back to Evansville in a few months, and it will be easy for me to drive over to Cate City now and then. I hope it will be easy.



IN FEWER WORDS

BY RALPH WALDO EMERSON

All government, in essence, is tyranny.

EDITORIAL

Report on America

I. INTRODUCTORY

AS FAR AS anyone can see, the forthcoming election will offer no real choice either of candidates or issues. The candidates will be essentially the same kind of men — pliable, prehensile, shifty, unscrupulous — for otherwise they neither would nor could be candidates. Their motives will be the same; to get jobs by any means they can and to keep those jobs as long as they can. Hence the choice between them will be merely the old invariable choice between Tweedledee and Tweedledum. As for issues, there will be none. The issue between New Deal and Anti-New-Deal is no issue at all; for the moment the election is past they both come down to the same Old Deal from the Bottom of the Pack. Hence the practical result of the election will be simply to show whether Mr. Roosevelt's myrmidons, or somebody else's myrmidons, will have the privilege and profit of victimizing and looting the American people for a certain specified length of time.

This is what universal suffrage in a republic always comes to and is bound to come to; and every voter who has cut his eye-teeth on an American election knows it. Whichever way he votes, he votes for his own undoing. Even when he entertains himself with the pleasant fiction of "voting for his pocketbook" he knows he is not actually doing anything of the kind, because both Tweedledum and Tweedledee have exactly the same design on his pocketbook — which is to keep it as nearly empty as they dare. He may vote as a matter of protest or of spite or of dislike, as many do; but he is well aware that, for all the practical good that will come of it, he might quite as well not vote at all.

In fact, it is notorious that many voters do not vote. As a general thing, after all the din and roar of a campaign, the meretricious publicity, the obscene exhibitionism, the brazen and despicable mendacity, if 50 per cent of the elec-

torate turns out on Election Day, it is a pretty good showing. No one should be shocked or surprised by this, although our so-called "better element" which dabbles in politics, periodically deplors it as a sign of bad citizenship. For our own part, we take it as evidence of good instinctive common sense; we are only inclined to wonder why the percentage should ever be as high as it is. Given a republic with universal suffrage—one vote per head, regardless of what is in the head or whether there is nothing in it—and given the kind of politics inevitable in such a republic, it seems to us that any person who has the small amount of sense needed to understand the situation will conclude that his vote is not worth casting.

Our contribution to this year's campaign will consist of three editorials based on this point of view; or rather, one editorial published in three installments. Conditions being what they are, it has occurred to us that many people must be wondering why we have elections. All America laughed at the recent German and Russian elections; for under the regimes existing in those countries they were obviously so useless and farcical that no one could see why Hitler and Stalin should go through the motions of

holding them. So, since ours are actually no less farcical, the question suggests itself at once: Why should *we* have them? And this leads directly to the general question: What are elections for? What is their idea? What purpose are they supposed to serve?

The conventional answer is, of course, the absurd one that they are supposed to register the people's free and independent judgment on the course which public affairs should take. The politician's answer is that they decide whether one or another set of people should draw salaries, distribute patronage, enjoy perquisites and prestige, and put themselves in the way of getting graft. The only comment needed to put both these answers in their proper place is to cite the fact that four amendments to the five-billion-dollar slush-bill (any one of which would have estopped the use of the money for political purposes) were quickly rejected by the last Congress. Neither answer, therefore, has any interest for an intelligent, honest person. Only a simpleton would take stock in the first, and only a crook in the second. There is another answer, however, which we may call the statesman's answer; it is one which will show our readers how any election—even Hitler's, even Stalin's, even

ours — can be made to serve a useful purpose.

The greatest of all British statesmen, Edmund Burke, in a letter to the Duke of Richmond, complained that while his political associates were all very keen on routine matters, such as pushing candidates, pushing measures, winning elections, they were not at all keen “on that which is the end and object of all elections, namely: *the disposing our people to a better sense of their condition*”. As the statesman sees it, elections are occasions for taking a sort of general inventory. They are occasions whereby the people may come to a frank out-and-out understanding of what sort of folks they are and where they stand, not only economically and politically, but morally, socially, and in every other way. Moreover, at election-time it is the chief business of their leaders and representatives to encour-

age, help, and advise them disinterestedly in regard to taking this inventory. Thus it may be seen that this view of an election is the direct opposite of the politician's view; for “disposing our people to a better sense of their condition” is the very last thing that a politician wants done. He wants them doped with lies and flatteries for the furtherance of his own purposes.¹ It is his chief business, as again Burke says, “still further to contract the narrowness of men's ideas, to confirm inveterate prejudices, to inflame vulgar passions, and to abet all sorts of popular absurdities”. The country will see plenty of this going on in the next three months. It will be the chief business of Mr. Roosevelt and his henchmen, and equally the chief business of those who oppose them; and “the end and object of all elections” will be wholly lost to sight.

All the more reason, then, why the type of reader we are addressing should rediscover it for himself and fix his mind on it unassisted. We have a suggestion to offer. What with the time spent in going to the polls and back, his casting a useless vote would probably take up at least an hour on Election Day: we suggest that he spend that hour quietly alone at home, going into the silences in an honest, earnest ef-

¹ It is an interesting and significant fact that statesmen almost never have any lasting influence on the course of political development. Burke is a conspicuous example; he was notoriously unsuccessful. The ablest statesmen in our history were John Adams, Franklin, Jefferson, and Calhoun; and none of them succeeded in leaving any doctrinal mark whatever on the actual development of our politics. For all the heed our “practical men” in politics ever paid them, they might as well not have lived. Hence Burke exactly described the Washington, D. C., of today when he wrote in a letter to Windham that “our politics want directness and simplicity. A spirit of chicanery predominates in all that is done; we proceed more like lawyers than statesmen. All our misfortunes have arisen from this intricacy and ambiguity in our politics.”

fort to get a better sense of the American people's condition at the present time. They are his own people. For better or worse, he is one of them; and if he can be said to owe them anything at all, we think the debt of an hour's honest thought devoted to getting a better sense of their condition is much more pressing and important than the debt of a vote to any politician.

As things stand, disinterested thought is not only all an intelligent citizen has to offer in the way of service to his country, but it is also the most useful service he can ever offer it. Readers sometimes complain that this magazine does not back up its criticism of public affairs with "constructive suggestions" and has no program of political action to offer. For instance, when it seems to these readers so imperative that "something must be done about it", why are we not advising people to "do something" more active than to sit still for an hour and think? Why not urge them to round up voters, organize pressure-groups, "put good men in office", muster Communist or Fascist Bunds, mount the soap-box for the underprivileged and skin the Economic Royalists, or line up with Rugged Individualism and destroy the New Deal? We might reply with perfect truth that we are

indeed asking our readers to do something; but instead of asking them to do something very easy, we pay them the compliment of asking them to do something very hard. Political action is unfortunately only too easy; one glance at the kind of people most successful at it is enough to show that anybody can do it. But thinking through a given subject for one hour on a straight stretch is about as hard work as there is, and very few can do it. We merely mention this in passing, however, before we go on to speak of the two main reasons for the policy which this magazine has always had, and to which it proposes to stick: the policy of doing whatever it can "to dispose our people to a better sense of their condition", and confining itself strictly to that.

II

The first reason is our firm belief that the time for remedial action ran out about a hundred-and-fifty years ago. We wish to be entirely frank with our readers about this. There was a time when the American people had their liberties; they had them all. What did they do with them? Apparently they could not sleep o' nights until they had turned them over to professional

politicians in exchange for some economic gain to this-or-that set of pressure-groups. If they had followed the lead of their statesmen — Franklin, Paine, John Adams — in refusing ever to let the State become a mere machine for distributing economic advantage in return for jobs, prestige, and graft, they would have kept themselves permanently in liberty, security, and prosperity. Instead, they chose, like the Englishmen of Burke's day, to follow the lead of their "practical men", and the State has little by little eaten its way into the individual's liberty, security, and prosperity until these benefits are now at the point of disappearance.

Nor can they be recovered. No kind or amount of political action, whether by ballot or by applying any method of revolution, will restore them; and those who have any other hope or expectation are leaning on a broken reed. Matters have gone too far for that, by a century-and-a-half. The last stage of a civilization is reached when the masses of mankind act for themselves through and by means of the State; and our civilization has reached that stage. After a hundred-and-fifty years of limited and partial State-control, first by one set of pressure-groups and then by another and another — the State act-

ing meanwhile as a mere auctioneer of economic advantage to the highest bidder — its complete control is now vested in the highest bidder of all, the enfranchised masses of mankind within the nation's borders. It seems to us the very acme of absurdity to imagine that the consequences of this can be anything but what they will inevitably be.

Nor are we alone in this belief. We share it with the most eminent political philosophers; with Montesquieu, Ernest Renan, and Taine in France, with Burke in England, and with Adams, Franklin, Madison, Jay in our own country. Herbert Spencer gave warning as long ago as 1883, in his essay, *The Coming Slavery*. In 1930 Ortega y Gasset reissued the warning that, with complete mass-control of the State, with the mass-man fully believing that he *is* the State, "he will tend more and more to set its machinery working, on whatever pretext, to crush beneath it any creative minority which disturbs it — disturbs it in any order of things, in politics, in ideas, in industry".

Probably no one needs any testimony to the length to which this tendency has gone in this country; the evidence of it is abundant enough. Ortega continues:

Suppose that in the public life of a

country some difficulty, conflict or problem presents itself, the mass-man will tend to demand that the State intervene immediately and undertake a solution directly with its immense and unassailable resources.

Of course he does; he goes straight to Washington with it. Even the great, the all-important, problem of how to get a living without working goes to Washington. Again:

When the mass suffers any ill-fortune or simply feels some strong appetite, its great temptation is that permanent sure possibility of obtaining everything, without effort, struggle, doubt or risk, merely by touching a button and setting the mighty machine in motion.

Naturally so; and quite as naturally the mass yields to that temptation and makes it bear fruit without stint or limit in the shape of "social legislation" covering everything from wage-fixing and price-fixing in large-scale industry to running a peanut-stand. What is the consequence?

The result of this tendency will be fatal. Spontaneous social action will be broken up over and over again by State intervention; no new seed will be able to fructify. Society will have to live *for* the State, man *for* the governmental machine.

With a national debt of some forty-billion dollars standing as a first mortgage on production, our society seems pretty well on its way to living *for* the State. Has the

reader ever compared the amount of time per annum that he spends in working for government, Federal, State, and local, with what he spends in working for himself? It is an instructive exercise.

And as, after all, it is only a machine whose existence and maintenance depend on the vital supports around it, the State, after sucking out the very marrow of society, will be left bloodless, a skeleton, dead with that rusty death of machinery, more gruesome than the death of a living organism.

So we think that our readers may well hesitate before dismissing our indifference to political action as sheer pessimism. The moment the State overbears society with its anti-vital supremacy—which our State has long done and which mass-control more and more urgently impels it to do—"society begins to be enslaved, to be unable to live except *in the service of the State*. The whole of life is bureaucratized. What results? The bureaucratization of life brings about its absolute decay in all orders." There can be no doubt of this, and we do not see how anyone can doubt that the process has gone too far here to be successfully resisted or even appreciably retarded.

Our second reason for suggesting thought rather than action is that wrong action is worse than in-

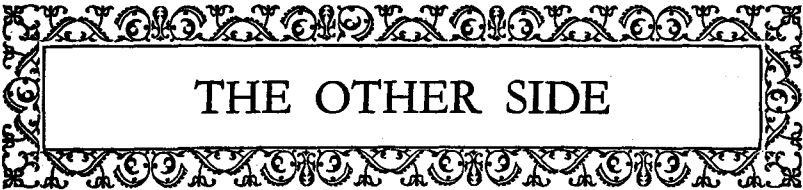
action, and right action can only come out of right thinking. But if public affairs are in as hopeless shape as we and our political philosophers believe they are, why think about them at all? Why not let them go as they lie, and think about something pleasanter, such as joy-riding, motion-pictures, a rising stock-market, and the composition of cocktails? If American civilization is actually over the edge and cannot be pulled back, what is the use of asking people to waste their time on getting a better sense of their condition?

For the present, no practical use whatever; but for the future perhaps a great deal of use. The collapse of a civilization does not mean that human life will be permanently swept off the earth. Several American civilizations have collapsed already — powerful ones, too — but human life is still here. So long as the continent can support a population, it will have one, and that population will create some sort of collective public life for itself. If a shattering experience

can now be made to start a tradition of thinking, there is a chance that enough of that tradition may hold over for the succeeding civilization to pick up and profit by. Such revivals of an earlier wisdom have happened before and may easily happen again.

In this three-part editorial we are doing only what we advise our readers to do. We are candidly trying to get a better sense of the American people's condition, and to put that sense on paper with the strict understanding that it should be accepted, not as a guide, but as a stimulant. Henry George used to say that he did not care *what* people thought about taxation, if they would only *think*. That is our position with regard to all public affairs. We are not in the least interested in agreement or disagreement. We are interested only in encouraging our readers to think for themselves, but really to *think*. That has been our only editorial motive throughout this magazine's existence, and we shall never have any other.

(The second and third sections of this editorial will be published next month and the month following. The second will deal with ideas now paramount in the Republic; the third will discuss personalities — chiefly the personality of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.)



THE OTHER SIDE

This department presents the views of some of those who most sharply disagree with THE MERCURY's editorial policy.

TWILIGHT OF CAPITALISM

BY BRUCE BLIVEN

FROM time to time I read articles or hear discussions by people who ask whether it is advisable for us to have a planned economy, making the assumption that we have a choice between two courses of conduct. Sometimes these individuals suggest that they do not like the way things are going, and propose that we should return to the principles and practices of an earlier day. Frequently they argue that President Roosevelt, apparently out of pure maliciousness, has altered the American way of life; announce that they don't approve what he has done, and demand that it be stopped.

Such statements seem to me to be complete nonsense. President Roosevelt is struggling with problems which also exist in every other country in the world where private Capitalism is still the prevailing rule. These problems have

not been created by any individual ruler, in the United States or anywhere else. The things that are done to meet the conditions have a striking degree of similarity in one country or another. I do not believe these problems will be excoriated by pretending that they do not exist. What you or I or any other individual likes or doesn't like seems to me of singularly little importance compared with movements that embrace millions of people and are part of the whole drift of our civilization. I am not arguing for defeatism or suggesting that it does not matter what we do. There is an enormous difference between an economy well-planned, in the interest of the whole community, and one badly-planned, in the interest of a special group. The only thing that is impossible is to have no planning at all.

Throughout the world, opportunities for large profits from private investment are dwindling or have entirely disappeared. Throughout the world, the state is claiming a greater and greater area of control. The Fascist countries confiscate wealth and destroy chances for private initiative just as readily as any others; the wealthy men who subsidized the beginnings of Hitler and Mussolini have since got it in the neck, as would any American capitalists who tried a similar experiment.

Ever since the industrial revolution, the world-wide economic system — if it can be called such — has operated on a basis of continuous expansion, requiring heavy saving on the part of the owners of productive machinery. This expansion was based upon at least three important factors: using up frontier areas in various countries, expanding foreign markets, especially among so-called backward peoples, and technological developments and new gadgets for an increasing standard of living. Today, the frontier has pretty well disappeared. Foreign markets are dwindling as the non-industrial countries equip themselves with machinery (sold to them by the capitalists of the industrial lands who thus neatly contrive to cut

their own throats). Technological advance will certainly continue, and we shall have many more gadgets, but progress in this field is unpredictable. You can't build an economy upon it.

Almost everywhere in the world, men's thinking lags behind mechanical advance and the new conditions it creates. In an era of mass production, which requires mass consumption, we find all sorts of obstacles and confusions. There is too little capital investment in some directions, probably too much in others. Many of those who control enterprise believe in and practice high prices and limited output, which curtails the opportunity for employment. They will all tell you that they believe in low profits and expanding wages, but this philosophy is never put into effect as completely as it could be. Within a few years, the productivity of labor in the United States increased something like 45 per cent, but real wages increased only about 30 per cent. For a long time, the chief answer to the dilemma thus created was to lend money abroad for the purpose of buying the surplus goods our own economic system could not absorb. Since these loans were largely unpayable, this amounted to giving away to foreigners the

products of our machines, which should have been used to benefit the whole mass of our population.

If I am right, our society has to be reorganized whether we like it or not. We cannot go on with a system which, internally, produces one depression after another; and, externally, keeps the threat of war hanging over the world. It is obvious that we should never duplicate the conditions obtaining under either Communism or Fascism in European countries that have never had any experience with political democracy or with even our own limited degree of economic democracy. In every country, the solution is largely determined by the traditions, the habits of mind, the native characteristics of its people.

I am not much impressed by the frenzied howls of the Conservatives, which I find in *THE AMERICAN MERCURY* and other places, regarding the "regimentation" of the New Deal. If these gentlemen had gone and looked at regimentation in the totalitarian states in Europe, as I have, they would realize how nonsensical their complaints are. To say that Mr. Roosevelt is a Socialist or a Communist is the exact opposite of the truth. He is doing his best to make private Capitalism work well enough to endure.

I can remember back for a good

many years, and I recall many previous instances when the Conservatives were about as much alarmed as they are today. In 1903 they attacked the proposal that child labor be limited to a forty-eight-hour week. In 1909, they rent the heavens with opposition to the Federal Income Tax. In 1913, they were fighting the Federal Reserve Act. They opposed woman's suffrage, public works to relieve depressions, Federal aid to those out of work, unemployment insurance and old-age pensions. Today, every one of these ideas has been accepted by the overwhelming mass of the people, Conservatives included. Does anyone imagine that if a Tory Republican became President in 1940 he would repeal the Social Security Law, or put an end to regulation of the stock market? If the Conservatives have an unbroken record of being wrong in their prophecies of disaster for thirty-five years within my own memory, why should I take them seriously now?

I, also, am critical of the New Deal, but from a different point of view. I wish it had faced the problems more frankly than it has, and taken more effective steps to cope with them. I regret that there has not been more continuous policy in Washington, a steadier long-

time view; I wish social-economic planning had really been tried, instead of only its first beginnings. I wish the New Deal had not listened so often to the voices of the Conservatives who don't understand economics and don't really know what is good for them or for the country. Two years ago, they urged the President to cut down relief expenditures in the interest of economy, promising a great upsurge of prosperity if he would. He took their advice, the country plunged into an appalling depression, and the same Conservatives rushed to Washington to ask the President for God's sake to start spending again. I feel that our national welfare is too serious a matter for questions of broad, fundamental policy to be put into the hands of bungling, incompetent amateurs like the heads of our great corporations and our big banks. I can understand the emotion which animates these gentlemen and others like them. It is fear. They have come into a period where nearly all the so-called fundamental precepts of their early days are no longer true. I don't blame them for being frightened; but I blame all of us, collectively, if we permit their combination of fear and ignorance to do us grave harm.

Through technological advance,

we have enormously multiplied the productive capacity of the individual. Instead, however, of using this new ability to bring a many-fold increase in the standard of living throughout the world, we have used it to create a huge burden of unemployment, partly concealed in some countries through labor-armies and the like. We have got our economic system bucking and jumping precisely as an automobile does when the inexperienced driver gives it too much gas too quickly. To take an obvious illustration, there are several areas in the world any one of which could supply at least half the shoes needed by all mankind. To say that each of these areas should be permitted to go on manufacturing shoes in unlimited amounts, and that the nations should go to war over the question of how to dispose of the surpluses, is folly that needs no underlining.

We can't go back to the pre-machine age, even if we want to. We can't find another frontier unless we take over the moon. Planning of output in terms of markets has only started. Governmental interference will continue to grow, and I can think of nothing more futile than for the Conservatives to sit around making faces at it.

THE STATE OF THE UNION

BY ALBERT JAY NOCK

Job-holders' Paradise

I SOMETIMES wonder what the author of the Massachusetts Bill of Rights would think if he could come back to earth and see what has happened to his bedrock doctrine of the "separation of powers". John Adams was the most profound student of government that we ever produced — Calhoun was perhaps his equal, but no more — and this doctrine was never better stated than in the Massachusetts Bill:

In the Government of this Commonwealth the legislative department shall never exercise the executive and judicial powers, or either of them; the executive shall never exercise the legislative and judicial powers, or either of them; the judicial shall never exercise the legislative and executive powers, or either of them: to the end it may be a government of laws and not of men.

This doctrine was not peculiar to Massachusetts. It was a national product, a good, sound, hundred-per-cent American principle. As the late Justice Gaynor, of the New York State Supreme Court, pointed out, it was "common to all of the State constitutions and bills

of rights, and was expressed therein in the most scientific and felicitous manner". The only special credit due to the Massachusetts Bill is for expressing it "in a manner which has never been excelled".

The Founding Fathers had a long spell of living under a government of men in the colonial days, and apparently they had seen enough of it, for they took the strongest measures they could against its recurrence. What, now, has happened to their doctrine? I am not interested in what has happened to it in various foreign countries where it is an exotic, but I am a little curious about what has happened to it right here in America where it was born. In his Independence Day speech at Gettysburg, Mr. Roosevelt presented a modern, stream-lined model of government in competition with the old-style, model-T affair which Lincoln put on the market at the same place some years ago. His phrase was "a people's government for the people's good", and his speech made it presumable that

this is the kind of government which he and his henchmen propose to furnish and are furnishing.

Now the best that can be made of a government "for the people's good" is one for what Mr. Roosevelt decides is for the people's good. This being so, the best that can be made of "a people's government" is one that the people will accept *ex post facto*, after they have had a taste of it. But what evidence is there that Mr. Roosevelt is competent to decide what is for the people's good? It is a large order. I have heard him praised for many good qualities, but I have yet to hear one of his admirers praise him for his intelligence. There is no evidence that he was ever able to do a respectable job of thinking on any subject, let alone such a subject as the welfare of 130,000,000 people; and there is a prodigious amount of evidence to the contrary. He has advisers, and presumably listens to them, but they are of his own choosing, and in any case the final decision rests with him. Is it to be supposed, then, that election to a public job touches off a sort of Whitsunday miracle whereby a notable intellectual lightweight becomes a competent judge of what is for the people's good?

Aside from this, moreover, one

may well ask who is Mr. Roosevelt, or Mr. Anybody, that he should set up a self-sprung scheme of government for the people's good, and then apply every kind and form of political pressure, fair or foul, to get the people to accept it. Maybe it actually is for their good, but are they not entitled to a free say in the matter? Lincoln's phrase "of the people, by the people" at least implies a more or less spontaneous assent, rather than a consent induced by cajolery, open purchase, blackmail, and dragooning. Perhaps the people do not know what is good for them; I for one am very sure they do not. Freely acting for themselves under a government of laws, however, gives them some faint chance of some time learning what is good for them; but under the paternalistic dry-nursing of a government of men — even men of the highest wisdom and the best intentions — they can never learn.

Running Lincoln's old-style model-T with the people at the wheel means untold centuries of bad-driving, stalling, complete smash-ups, and appalling casualties, but it is barely possible (I have some doubt of it, but it is certainly possible) that in the end the survivors, if any, will have learned how to drive. On the other hand,

first, it is highly improbable that Mr. Roosevelt's new model, with the people in the back seat, will have any better accident-record or any lower casualty-lists; and second, no amount of back-seat driving can ever make good drivers. So, admitting that it is a choice of evils, the old model-T is still probably a better bet than Mr. Roosevelt's high-powered 1938 Marx-Hitler racer.

All this, as I say, is taking the most favorable view of the phrase which Mr. Roosevelt used at Gettysburg. I do not take that view. In my humble opinion, what a job-holder does is always more significant than what he says, and all Mr. Roosevelt's public conduct points steadily to something very different. It points to government by a boss-owned and boss-operated partisan machine, for partisan purposes. What else is government by "must" legislation, or government by executive order? Government by an executive, exercised through bureaus, boards, commissions—bodies appointed by him and responsible to him alone—what kind of government is that? Some of Mr. Roosevelt's critics believe that his motives are good, and that his pretensions may be taken at their face value. They say that while he does great evil, he

does it that good may come. I believe nothing of the kind. The two Napoleons put up precisely the same pretensions, and so do Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini; and I take no more stock in pretensions as coming from Mr. Roosevelt than as coming from these gentry. You will go a long way in history to find an absolutist usurper who did not seize power in the name of the people and maintain stoutly that he was governing for the people's good; and you will go further yet to find one whom the mere passage of time has not marked indelibly as a common liar.

II

We are beginning to notice one of the interesting consequences of substituting a government of men for a government of laws. When once you establish the principle of personal government by a highly-placed job-holder, you establish it for all job-holders. Let a *Duce* or a *Führer* or a President ignore the limitations of law and start arbitrarily imposing his will on the people-at-large, then every scurvy little Dogberry in his political retinue takes the cue from his superior and starts imposing *his* will on the people in his petty bailiwick. Mr. Roosevelt, for instance, ad-

vises Congressmen not to be too particular about the constitutionality of a measure which interests him; how long a step from that is it to Governor Murphy's flat nullification of law, or to Mayor Hague's assertion, "I am the law"? Given a Roosevelt who manipulates or disregards the law as he sees fit, and you immediately spawn a tribe of Murphys, Hagues, Ickeses, Wallaces, Blacks, Mintons, who may freely manipulate or disregard the law as *they* see fit.

Thus we now have minor executives everywhere openly violating the principle that the way to administer law is the way prescribed by law, and are instead administering it arbitrarily or not at all. We have mayors "forbidding" this or that — entertainments, assemblies, demonstrations, public speeches — thus passing judgment on them in advance of the fact, which is not only an exercise of the judicial power by an executive, but a flagrant misuse of that power. We have police-chiefs exercising censorship arbitrarily and at their own pleasure, in disregard of primary constitutional rights. Under our new system of government by innumerable boards, bureaus, commissions, and that most ill-conditioned of all institutions, the Congressional investigating com-

mittee, these bodies exercise not only the legislative and executive powers, but some of them exercise the judicial power as well. The result is a government of men, pure and simple, precisely as the author of the Massachusetts Bill foresaw it would be. Its wilful and often malevolent character is so regularly manifested and so well understood that the term "cracking down" has become a commonplace of our newspapers. Once the limitations of law are overpassed, the way is open for the satisfaction of all manner of private grudges and dislikes. It is notorious that when a "purge" is declared, a great many more private enemies than public enemies are liquidated.

Well, then, what about it? Politicians who carry water on both shoulders say that times have changed, and that there is some peculiarity about our times which makes the separation of powers inadvisable — to a certain extent, of course, and with carefully protected restraints. Mr. Landon was saying something like this the other day. It may be so, and if our people generally feel that way, I certainly have nothing to say. After the French Revolution, which he thought was an unmitigated calamity, Edmund Burke ended his reflections on it by saying:

If a great change is to be made in human affairs, *the minds of men will be fitted to it*; the general opinions and feelings will draw that way. Every fear and every hope will forward it; and then they who persist in opposing this mighty current in human affairs will appear rather to resist the decrees of Providence itself than the mere designs of men.

This being so, he said, "it would be presumptuous in me to do more than to make a case" against the principles of the Revolution, leaving the final decision to the judgment of the future. Very possibly, if the Revolution had stopped with its first phase, as Mr. Jefferson hoped it might, Burke would have lost his case; the judgment of the future would have been against him. But it did not do that; revolutions seldom do. It ran on through its second and third phase, with its original principles and promoters very thoroughly liquidated; ran on into one amazing excess of murderous lunacy after another, and finally into complete chaos; and the future has given Burke his verdict.

If "the general opinions and feelings" of our people are indeed drawing towards the revolutionary change from a government of laws to a government of men — as they quite appear to be doing — it would be presumptuous in me to do more than to make a case

against that tendency. Indeed, I am even spared the trouble of doing that, for in the July issue of this magazine Channing Pollock presented my case far more ably and cogently than I could hope to do. Where there is a government of men, the actual ruler of the people is fear; and where fear rules, there is moral and economic chaos.

None but a malefactor is ever afraid of a government of laws; none ever need be. Everyone, criminal or innocent, honest or dishonest, is afraid of a government of men, and with reason. It is in fact the honest, industrious, and well-disposed who have the greatest reason to be afraid of it, for they are the most acutely conscious of their helplessness. Despoiled of initiative, they become apathetic, demoralized, pursued by a nagging sense of outrage and indecency, and the general consequence is an incurable progressive debility in every department of life. This debility is plainly manifest now; Mr. Pollock has given a full factual account of its symptoms. No one can possibly mistake or miss it; it is everywhere. Those whose opinions and feelings turn towards a government of men may make what prognosis from it they see fit. I make none; I merely mark it as Exhibit A, and rest my case.

AMERICANA

NEW YORK

THE high-brow *Nation* writes sport news in a style to suit the Pinko Proletariat:

Joe Louis on June 22 knocked out Max Schmeling, Adolf Hitler, Julius Streicher, Benito Mussolini, and Jim Crow. He also poked holes in Neville Chamberlain's foreign policy.

AND, not to be outdone, the scholarly *New Masses* reports the Communist Party Line reaction to the fight:

The Louis-Schmeling fight for the heavyweight championship of the world was one of the greatest dramas of make-believe ever witnessed in America, a drama which manipulated the common symbols and impulses in the minds and bodies of millions of people so effectively as to put to shame our professional playwrights, our O'Neills, our Lawsons, and our Caldwells. Promoter Mike Jacobs has accidentally won the rare right of wearing the purple robes customarily reserved for Euripides and Sophocles. . . . An open friend of Hitler and an avowed supporter of the Nazis, Schmeling caught the fancy of many reactionary Americans, plus the leaders of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Japan, and even certain circles in England. . . . Louis carried the good wishes of even the poor whites of the deep South, something unparalleled in the history of America.

THE modern Personal, as appearing in the want-ad columns of the esteemed *Herald-Tribune*:

F.D.R. — Tried reach you everywhere: Postcard, letter, telegram, even picket line. Family frantic. Rescind that wage cut and all will be forgiven. Desperately, Federal Theatre worker. W.P.A.

UP-TO-THE-MINUTE fashion-note for the Comrades in the stylish *New Masses*:

When shopping for a summer hat ask the salesgirl, "Is this a toyo?" If it is, the chic thing is to pass it by. Because toyoys are made of Japanese ricepaper. . . . Each one sold helps buy bullets for the Japanese armies in China.

NORTH CAROLINA

RARE good taste of an evangelist reported in the erudite Raleigh *News and Observer*:

A throng of kids is expected to be present for the last feature event of the boys' and girls' Booster Brigade campaign under the direction of Bill McGarrahan at the tabernacle on Halifax Street when a pig will take the leading part in a unique and interesting story. The pig, with manicured toenails, will be dressed in a boy's suit and get a hair cut, after having its first real bath. Adults are welcome to attend this event, it was

announced. Evangelist Jimmie Johnson will speak tonight on the subject, "I Cannot Come Down".

OHIO

UNUSUAL repertorial frankness exemplified in the columns of the alert Niles *Daily Times*:

Dr. C. W. Danford will take part in the services when the Thomas A. Edison Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church is dedicated. Morning, afternoon, and evening services will be held.

A CORRESPONDENT to the personal column of the cultured *Writer's Digest* seeks to re-awaken interest in an almost-forgotten subject:

Wish to correspond with all thoughtful persons seriously interested in the subject of virginity for itself alone. Important information. World appeal. Box R-1.

OREGON

INADVERTENT (perhaps) reflections on the evolution of a radio crooner, as presented by the celebrated Portland *Journal*:

Frank Hornaday, young Denver tenor who appeared on Grace Moore's program in April, will return to the broadcast for a guest appearance tomorrow. Miss Moore and Hornaday will sing a duet.

Tadpoles require two or more years to gain maturity.

WISCONSIN

THE candid advertiser knocks his

own product in the Janesville *Daily Gazette*:

There's nothing so rare as a day in June

But the one who said it spoke too soon

Had he waited 'till now, he'd truthfully have said

There's nothing so rare as FRESH GOLD CUP BREAD.

IN OTHER NEW UTOPIAS ENGLAND

QUESTIONABLE note of sympathy in the *Sunday Express*:

Perhaps it will be some comfort to his wife that at the time he crashed he was travelling faster than any man has ever travelled on a motorcycle before.

LATEST British style note for canines, as advertised in the *chic* London *Times*:

Ascot Fashions Display! Smart dogs should arrange now to come to Bellmead Kennels, Haslemere 452, Surrey. All Beauty treatments given. — Slimming, foam baths, top-knots singed, and eyebrows made glamorous.

How To Get In The Swim, from a want-ad in the nobby London *Times*:

TIARA — Lady of social position wishes to HIRE an imposing TIARA for one night. Bankers' reference. Would pay up to £15 and insurance. — Replies in confidence.

DOWN TO EARTH

BY ALAN DEVOE

The Brave Men of Brielle

THERE is no lack of earnest and confidently-proffered remedies for the world's distress. It is variously proposed to cure us by Communism, Fascism, New Dealism, Agrarianism, and even by Buchmanism and Theosophy. Risking an instant ridicule, the present writer would like to suggest that the two last-named panaceas, for all their manifest absurdities, are possibly the soundest of the lot.

Nothing is easier than to poke fun at the divers odd cults and sects which are currently arising out of our dark despair like so many mushrooms thrusting up their grotesque pileated heads from a heap of leaf-mold. It is not difficult to make sport of these childish rituals and preposterous thaumaturgies; as often as not, the cults are comically silly. But all the same it does not speak very well either for a man's charity or his wisdom if he scorns them with a too-contemptuous derision. For at least these strange and wayward Groups and Movements have recognized—if only through a weird distorting-

glass—that our race stands in desperate need of a return to piety.

The kind of piety here meant, of course, is not a smug, frock-coated churchiness, but a rather broader and more inclusive thing. What is meant is the spirit of homageful amazement in the presence of the natural miracles which encompass us . . . that spirit of reverence and exultation, in the presence of such commonplace miracles as crickets and sunrises and veery-songs, which must forever prevent a man from being vandal, or from dealing heedlessly, contemptuously, with the holy mysteries. We need to regain our old attitudes of simple reverence and wondering awe.

Yesterday (so the morning paper tells) a great soft-flipped sea-beast nosed her way up the Manasquan River in New Jersey. She was a sea-cow—kin to what in southern waters is called a manatee—a cumbersome, warm-blooded water-mammal of singular gentleness and a curiously human look. It is thought likely that manatees were the originals of those mermaids

that fanciful old sailors used to see. This particular sea-cow, yesterday, was in quest of sanctuary, for her sleek, salt-wet belly was big with young. What befell her, as she swam near to the town of Brielle, is briefly told. The first of the inhabitants to sight her, as she passed quietly upstream in search of haven, discharged both barrels of a shotgun and was successful in tearing a bloody hole in her.

She did not die, though, then. She did not die until a dozen, or a score, of additional citizens of Brielle had sunk as many iron-barbed gaffs into her warm flesh, had harried her inshore with blows of clubs and gun-butts, and had at last, with grappling tackle, hauled her to dry land. Lying on the shore, blood-smeared and in an extremity of terror, she did that thing which made the *Herald Tribune* deem the episode worth recounting for the breakfast-table amusement of its readers. While a group of brave Briellemen were smashing her skull with clubs, and one especially intrepid fellow was pushing with all his might against her belly, she delivered from her convulsed womb the twenty-five babies that she had been seeking to spawn in some safe sanctuary. This done, her clumsy blood-soaked body shuddered, and she was dead.

II

This is not much of a story, as newspaper stories go. It contains no portent of Communism or Fascism, and is remote from those sociological issues which alone are currently considered worthy of scareheads. It is possible, none the less, to read in it an implication quite as ghastly as any whisper that drifts from Moscow, any dark tale out of Japan. For it must be clear to even the most rudimentary moralist that there is a terrifyingly tiny difference between the wilful butchery of a manatee and the wilful butchery of a man. In either case there is the same gross indifference to that attribute of life which used to be called its sanctity; in either case there is the same grisly phenomenon of human ears grown deaf to entreaty, human eyes grown blind to the miracle of existence, human hearts grown heedless and uncaring of those subtle and precious values which can inhere alike in men and manatees and mice and millipedes. There is the same deadly absence — to return to the starting-point — of that simple ancient virtue which can be called by the name of natural piety.

It is likely that many of us can never return to the old tribal faiths,

the particular theological orthodoxies of our fathers. But it is one of the tragedies of our time that, in our enthusiastic iconoclasm, our zeal to disavow the venerable dogmas of this formal faith or that, we have disavowed all faith entirely. Because our science has cast doubt on this or that phrase of what used to be our Holy Scriptures, we have been affrighted into damning the whole of theocratic thinking; and because the religion of a man like William Jennings Bryan was shown up as something of a joke, we have been persuaded to fancy that religiousness itself is only a kind of humorous delusion. Piety, in the sense of the stiff-necked, thin-lipped piousness of the grim old sectarians, was never a very lovely or very admirable thing. But piety, in the sense of a humility, an exultant wonderment, a gentleness of tread when we are in the holy places of the earth, is not today a less lovely or less saving thing than it was when Francis knelt in a meadow of buttercups at Assisi.

There is an ancient stern injunction that men, to enter heaven, must become as little children. It is an advice rich with truth and full of a deep wisdom; and it is an advice which, more than any other precept, we have steadfastly ignored. The tribal politicians have

constructed their rigmaroles of projects, the questers after Truth have sought it in economics and social-patterns, and plain men have everywhere overlaid their simple, natural, child-like awareness with a thousand kinds of solemn and obscurative nonsense. It is the child-like vision that we must bring back, the child-awareness of beauty and mystery and miracle that we must revive to succor us in this bleak time. We are equipped to see and smell and touch the loveliness of an anemone in Spring woods, and our ears are not unable to hear the morning-song of thrushes. No man, in childhood, is deaf and blind to things like these; the little children look out upon the world with eyes big with wonder, and are full of a consuming ecstasy in the presence of such simple miracles as budding sassafras-twigs and running waters and the whorls of multicolored sea-shells. To the little child is given the key of happiness, and the key, likewise, of wisdom. He trails his fingers in cool water, and it is enough to make him laugh and sing with the gladness of living. He breathes the Spring wind, or watches snow-flakes falling, or stares at the patterned lichen on a stone, and his heart is set singing with the glory and the wonder of the world.

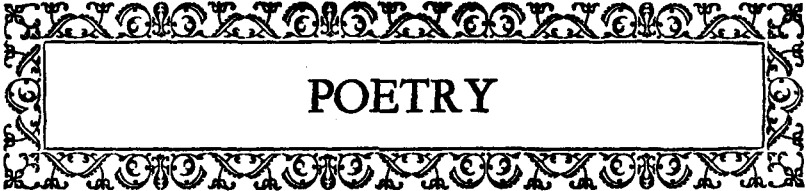
III

We have lost our responsiveness to the glory and the wonder, we fanatic materialists, and in our revolt from the tenets of the outworn creeds have deluded ourselves into thinking that we can live and prosper with a philosophy that totally ignores those subtle intimations and delicate intuitive awarenesses which are the token in our hearts of that Great Spirit which has been called by many names. Gautama the Buddha, subsumed with a tranquil contentment under his leafy bo-tree, was wiser than we are; Lao-tse was wiser; Christ and Peter, and the initiate followers of these, had access to realms of being from which we now are alien and excluded. We run our frantic ways, like so many bemused rabbits in a warren, and never think how many of our ills and strifes might disappear if we would but renew, quite simply and quite humbly, that vanished awe and homage for the mystery of creation and for its Source, which would perforce stay us from doing wanton violence to even so lowly a fellow-being as a sea-cow.

It is quite possible to claim, I think, that the dazzled blackamoor who calls himself Father Divine

may well, despite his zany vagaries, be closer to the truth than are, for example, those thinkers who expect to heal the sickened modern heart by abolishing the Standard Oil Company. Perhaps the crotchety messiahs whose advertisements now crowd the Religious Notices in the Sunday papers — the Swamis and New Thoughtists and Yogis and the rest — are not, after all, quite wholly wrong. For however fantastical the creeds they propose, this much, at least, they have acknowledged and recognized: that deep down below our economic woes and social troubles, there is a basic disorientation of our souls. There is a misery amongst us, and its well-springs are in our spirit; there is an empty lack in our lives, and it is a lack of simple piety.

A man need be no cultist, no religious devotee, to agree that these are sad and solemn truths. He need only reflect a little, I think, on the day's newspaper-headlines, and then look out from his window at a phoebe or a blade of grass. He need only call to mind, perhaps, a certain sea-cow that swam up the Manasquan River in search of hospice; he need only ponder on *The Brave Men of Brielle*.



POETRY

LITTLE SHINING SNAKES

BY LOUIS STODDARD

Now let your dark eyes be quiet and shining with the love of life
And not the fear of it. The whims of humor are cruel,
For humor and fear are not the products of reason,
But a part of the anthropoid past we have not outgrown.
I have thought of a pretty trick to play. This is it —
Though I promise not to do it: to come to you
Holding a toad behind me, promising flowers. Guess which hand.
Either one will get you the toad. The miserable trick
Is variable. I could come with lilacs behind me,
Etching the sensitive plate of your mind with the acid of terror,
To picture a toad or a snake that you run from and stumble.
Then I thrust in your screaming face the flowers abhorred
Because of the fear I nursed, the ignorance fostered.
Yet all around us where the cities blotch the valleys
It is being done, in the caves of finance, the chilly steel wombs of wars,
In the neat piles of stone where priests thrust hell in your face
And hold theoretical heaven behind their backs,
On the highway billboards that are rotting forever away
Though the bright paint keeps them a while from the truthful vines.
No, let your dark eyes be still serene, the throat pulse sweet and full.
Your composure is reassuring to see. Keep it so long as you can.
Pity the anthropoid things who torment you with inconsequential
Little shining snakes. The reptilian eyes are not of too low an order
To be bright with fear, which is not of you or me or of men,
But of the one justice that men mete out to snakes, and a few men
Mete out to many, and come to themselves in their time.
Oh, the snakes' tormentors and yours . . . their eyes are fleshed in fat
And they laugh till the fat wrinkles close over their eyes.
The thin ones stare till the eyes protrude, but they cannot see.

Your fear of the little snakes is no great matter;
Pity the swarming practitioners of minor cruelty
Who prove themselves too stupid to sense the subtler ways
By which they are monstrously duped and driven themselves,
Too stupid to see the man-made things that coil around their lives.

ANOTHER PSALM

BY MARGUERITE STEEDMAN

I HAVE come out of the green pastures,
Away from the silent waters and the sheep.
And I have left the quiet, shadowed valley
That promised sleep.

There is a table set in the presence of my enemies;
Its single cup must overflow with wine.
And the bitter oil is there for my anointing —
So do the lonely dine.

APOSTATE

BY DOROTHY KISSLING

TELL me no more of visions and no more
Of heights to scale, who from the highest fell;
Henceforth for me a cottage with a door
To shut out heaven and warn me back from hell,
And after all the lightnings of the storm
And the egregious meteors of the skies,
A little fire, to keep me snug and warm,
That never rises and that never dies.
Something there is of pain, a little lack,
A little soundless crying of the heart,
But nothing that compels my looking back
And nothing that will not in time depart.
Light me the fire that memory may be burned.
I have been elsewhere; but I have returned.

THE LIBRARY

The Eternal Jewish Problem

BY JOHN W. THOMASON, JR.

WHEN you are looking into things, it seems to me that you should go back to their beginnings. I find my precedent in one of our most respected weekly prints, where today a bitter reactionary compares the present spending regime to the ancient worship of the Golden Calf.

Searching the records, you turn up an anti-Semitic movement in the Book of Exodus, immediately prior to the departure of the Children of Israel from Pharaoh's bondage. To abridge: it appears that, in some not-quite-determined millennium before Christ, a young Hebrew named Joseph was liquidated by his brothers, in the course of a family row; and after hard experiences, rose to a position of authority in the land of Egypt. One gathers that, being diligent in business, he was appointed Relief Administrator under Pharaoh in the course of the serious depression afflicting the ancient world at that time. There came before him a

deputation from the distressed small-neighbor Canaan, begging a loan, or a reciprocal trade agreement, or some such thing; and behold, the deputation was led by those same violent brothers who had dealt so severely with young Joseph a few years back.

Returning good for evil, this gentle head of the Egyptian WPA invited his relatives into the country — themselves, their families, their slaves, their brood-stock, and whatever they had — and planted them on a re-settlement project in Goshen. It cannot have been a very large lot of refugees — seventy souls, exclusive of Joseph and the servants — and Joseph controlled the relief allotments. No doubt the press reaction was favorable, and Egypt enjoyed the pleasant glow that comes from charity extended to the needy and oppressed.

In the fullness of time, Joseph died and was buried, and all that generation. And, says Exodus: . . . *the children of Israel were*

fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them. . . . The administration changed: . . . there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply. . . .

This was the Pharaoh of the Hard Heart; and the steps he took are set forth in Exodus, Two. He put them in labor camps, and employed them rigorously on public works. . . . *But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. . . .* (No need for modern Nazidom to tax its powers of invention; it has been done before, and is written down.) Then the Pharaoh attempted to regulate the Hebrew birth-rate; he suborned the midwives, but that was no good either. The midwives reported: . . . *the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. . . .* Thoroughly aroused, the Pharaoh then resorted to straight infanticide, the killing of the men-children. Just what luck he had with this is not reported, probably not much; but a direct

result was the saving alive of the child who was called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter, and who became Moses, and walked with Jehovah among the thunders, a very curious story in itself. Thereafter, through Chapter Twelve, the tale unrolls, and it is a fine tale. Sleight-of-hand performances unequaled by any modern magician; plagues of locusts; the river Nile banks-full of blood, horrible to see and to smell. Somewhat softened, Pharaoh stated officially that he desired nothing so much as for the Hebrews to get out of Egypt, leaving behind, of course, all their valuables. Whereupon the thing mounted to its shuddering crescendo—the Hebrews had no idea of leaving their valuables—in the night time . . . *there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house (Egyptian) where there was not one dead.* Pharaoh did not wait on daylight. He sent for Moses in the thick darkness, and said . . . *Rise up, and get you forth from among my people. . . . Also take your flocks and your herds . . . and be gone! . . . And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men. . . .* And the Hebrews went forth, all of them. They had been four hundred and

thirty years in Egypt (says Exodus) and their increase from Jacob and his twelve sons to those . . . *that journeyed from Rameses to Succoth . . . was . . . about six hundred thousand that were men, beside children.*

That convulsion of a society in the elder earth has repeated itself endlessly, to this day. Current and topical report and comment on the Jewish question bulk large in the public prints of every nation. The ordeal of the German Jews has been for years pitiful before the world, and while I write, they of Austria have the cup of trembling poured for them. The thing is at large in the Western Hemisphere, and the South American republics are passing anti-Semitic ordinances. Here is a great people, of all races the most tenacious in their characteristics, and in aptitude for the arts and the sciences most gifted, to whom a living-space is increasingly denied. The solution of their problem is a challenge to every thoughtful mind, for the matter has as many legs as a centipede — social, racial, political, and economic.

II

Out of very many offerings, I find two books which seem to me

worthy of the attention of interested persons. The first is Hilaire Belloc's *The Jews*.¹ It was written in 1922, when the Jewish faction was riding high in Russia and conducting business as usual elsewhere, and when the only acute phase of the matter was the resettlement of Palestine by the Zionists, under the aegis of the British Government. (Fighting in Zion today: Jews, Arabs, British Regulars, all cutting throats.) A lengthy introduction to its third edition, dated within the year, brings it up to the present. One should read the introduction last, for it is curious to note with what accuracy Mr. Belloc foretold the sad events of the Nineteen Thirties in Central Europe, a decade before they broke. And one may turn aside to note that the way to forecast the future is to know the past: what has happened will happen again. And that aphorism suggests another: that the Jews themselves neglect to inform themselves on the history of their race. Certainly their leaders, as one said of the Bourbons, appear to forget nothing and to learn nothing.

But, Hilaire Belloc. I quote his thesis:

. . . that the continued presence of the Jewish nation intermixed with other

¹ *The Jews*, by Hilaire Belloc. \$2.50. Houghton, Mifflin.

nations alien to it presents a permanent problem of the gravest character: that the wholly different culture, tradition, race, and religion of Europe make Europe a permanent antagonist to Israel, and that the recent and rapid intensification of that antagonism gives to the discovery of a solution of immediate and highly practical importance. . . .

Stating the problem in its simplest terms, he finds it to consist of:

. . . reducing or accommodating the strain produced by the presence of an alien body within any organism. . . . There are two ways to such a desirable end. . . . The first is by the elimination of what is alien. The second is by its segregation. There is no other way. . . .

He continues:

The elimination of an alien body may take three forms. It may take a frankly hostile form — elimination by destruction. It may take a form, also hostile but less hostile — elimination by expulsion. It may take a third form . . . elimination by absorption; the alien body becomes an indistinguishable part of the organism in which it was originally a source of disturbance and is lost in it. . . .

As for the second method, segregation, he considers that it may be applied in two ways: hostile or amicable. If hostile, the alien element is segregated without regard to its own end or desires; the plan is framed solely from the point of view of the organism invaded; the alien element is simply cut off from all avenues through which it can

affect its host. If amicable, the action takes full account of the thing segregated as well as of the organism segregating it, and considers the good of both parties. Mr. Belloc writes under the conception that all solutions of the Jewish problem, other than amicable segregation, are either impracticable, or bad in morals, or both. In a word, the policy Mr. Belloc advocates is a policy wherein

. . . the Jews on their side shall openly recognize their wholly separate nationality and we on ours shall equally recognize that separate nationality, treat it without reserve as an alien thing, and respect it as a province of society outside our own . . . any attitude which falls short of this policy or is very different from it will now soon breed disaster.

Thus Mr. Belloc, a reflective man, sixteen years ago. His discussion of his thesis, which follows, is informed and reasonable; and if some of it is vague, that vagueness proceeds from the endeavor of an honest man to set forth, and honestly to evaluate, all the sides of a many-sided question. There is no lack of historical example, and Mr. Belloc knows his annals as well as any scholar alive. It is a case of too much evidence, rather than not enough, for a clear-cut conclusion. The Pharaoh's solution, you note, was elimination by expulsion. The

Sumerian kings tried elimination by expulsion, and also by destruction, the details whereof are written in Jeremiah. Flavius Josephus has recorded the methods of Vespasian and of Titus; the Caesars had great trouble with their Jews, and in the end it was the Jews who conquered. Mr. Belloc alludes also to those important but little-known occasions on which the Jews struck back, for the thing is not one-sided at all: you recall how, in the fine tale of Esther, Ahasuerus' glamour-girl, Uncle Mordecai defeated an anti-Semitic movement in Persia, the Jews in the Great King's provinces slaying of their foes seventy-and-five thousand, all on the thirteenth day of the month Adar. In the time of the Emperor Hadrian there was a movement of Jews against the non-Jews of the Cyprian and Libyan cities which, says Mr. Belloc, far exceeded in violence the late wreckage of Russia. Instances multiply, in ancient, medieval, and modern times, to support his conclusion — that there is permanent antagonism between Beni Israel and the others.

When Mr. Belloc reaches Bolshevism in his argument, he is not vague at all. He regards the Bolshevik explosion "as the point of

departure from which shall date the new attitude of the Western nations towards the Jews". The Bolshevik revolution was, he considers, inevitably Jewish in character: it was the endeavor of a Jewish organization to transform society; it destroyed Russia; it flames today in Spain; and it infects the world. Hence, he finds, the anti-Semite feature of the Nazi movement, a thing reflecting the apprehension of the non-Jewish societies, their horror and their hates.

But his summing-up returns to vagueness. The only method untried is the one he advocates: amicable segregation. It must be adopted by all of us, he urges, or disaster is sure. Just how we are to adopt it and apply it, he fails to specify. For his part, he cries, "Peace be to Israel", and there he leaves it. Myself, I find his discussions immensely interesting, and his reasoning clever, as it always is. But neither the one nor the other, in my mind, supports his monstrous accusation of the race.

III

The other book is *Where Now, Little Jew?* by Dr. Magnus Hermansson,² a Swedish scholar of

² *Where Now, Little Jew?*, by Magnus Hermansson. \$2.50. Albert Bonnier.

obvious high-attainment. It has the unfailing charm of simplicity, and while Dr. Hermansson's processes lack the ponderous rationalism of Hilaire Belloc, one recognizes in the Swede a deal of common sense, coupled with a hopeful idealism. He makes his case on his first page:

Since the Jews were banished from their country, their history in the lands where they have sought refuge has always been the same. Everywhere a parallel course of development can be clearly seen:

1. A nation summons the Jews or bids them welcome when they come on their own initiative.

2. The Jews are not only liked but often are given privileges not accorded to the common people.

3. Under such circumstances they take part in and further the country's cultural, artistic, and scientific interests.

4. Gradually a certain *malaise* makes itself felt in increasingly wide circles and soon turns into enmity and hate against the Jews. The result is acute discomfort on both sides and an often century-long period of alternating favoring and oppression of the Jews.

5. Finally we have open persecution, banishment, and massacre. The exiles seek or are offered sanctuary in another country, and the same course is repeated which Siegfried Passarge, the German ethnographer, calls "the host nations emotional cycle *vis-à-vis* the Jews."

With that cycle, one can find no fault in fact. It is the testimony of history; and both Jew and Gentile

may recognize the stigmata of the fourth period, as above set forth, now incipient in this country.

Dr. Hermansson's discussion proceeds under four heads: the Jewish Question as a World problem, as a National problem, as a Racial problem, and finally, as a Religious problem. Too circumstantial to quote, it presents the most comprehensive factual-summary of events that I have seen. He finds the root of the trouble at the end of the first chapter: the ancient crime that Jew and Gentile shared on Calvary. He states his solution in the first sentence of the second chapter: let the Jews — and the Christians — be converted to Christ. There are some three hundred very readable pages in the book, but that is the conclusion of the whole matter.

Undoubtedly, such a conversion would solve the Jewish Problem. It would solve a great many problems. But I am afraid Mr. Belloc — of whose ideas Dr. Hermansson does not think so much — will class it with the impracticable schemes. Even so, you recall George Bernard Shaw's remark, to the effect that there is much to be said for Christianity; and that it would be interesting if the world, after two thousand years of violence, gave Christianity a trial.

THE CHECK LIST

(Continued from front advertising section)

BIOGRAPHY

★★★ FANNY KEMBLE: A PASSIONATE VICTORIAN, by Margaret Armstrong. \$3.00. *Macmillan*. Colorful life of Sarah Siddons' niece, who once wrote, "The death I should prefer would be to break my neck off the back of a good horse at full gallop on a fine day." Passionate is hardly the word for Fanny, but she did lead a very full life, which included, among other ups and downs, theatrical triumphs on both sides of the Atlantic; a much-publicized separation, because of her Abolitionist writings, from her slave-owner husband; and, toward the last of her eighty-three years, the close friendship of Henry James. Miss Armstrong has done a thoroughly good job.

★★★ ONE MAN IN HIS TIME, by Maude and Otis Skinner, \$2.50. *University of Pennsylvania*. "The Adventures of Henry Watkins, Strolling Player", written from the diary Watkins kept from 1845 to 1863. Watkins was never a star, but as actor, manager, and playwright, he was an important figure in the development of the American stage. The Skinners' account is admiring, though not annoyingly so. There are numerous illustrations of the boardwalkers who were great in those days.

★★★ A NEW AMERICAN: THE LIFE STORY OF JUSTICE SALVATORE A. COTILLO, by Nat J. Ferber. \$2.50. *Farrar & Rinehart*. The biography of an Italian-American who, coming to this country at the age of seven, grew up to become the first immigrant of his race to win a seat

in the New York State Assembly, and to rise further to be one of the few genuine Liberals. As Al Smith says in his introduction, Cotillo "stands forth as a giant" among his race, with "useful and even more valuable service ahead of him". Only one error of importance, indeed, mars Cotillo's record: his failure to de-horn the incredible Mayor, LaGuardia, who had violated a New York City law by accepting a Federal appointment while holding an elective office. Mr. Ferber's portrait is well written, and will be helpful to those who are wondering what "Liberalism" really means.

★★ CROOKS IN CLOVER, by Percy J. Smith. \$2.50. *Lippincott*. The not-particularly-well-written account of his experiences by a Scotland Yard inspector who has specialized in the pursuit of swindlers. Smith's flim-flam artists were nowhere near as ingenious as their American contemporaries (none seem to have gone beyond the "play to the wall" which is kindergarten here), and he caught most of them through stool-pigeons.

★★ KARL MARX, MAN AND FIGHTER, by Boris Nicolaievsy and Otto Maenchenhelfen. \$3.50. *Lippincott*. A well-written sympathetic biography of Marx by a Russian Communist and a German Socialist. Even in this favorable account of old Karl, the number of his erroneous assumptions, false prophecies, and plain mistakes in thinking is astounding. An accurate biography of Marx is badly needed, and ought

to be widely successful as well as intrinsically valuable: for Karl is probably the most over-rated of human beings today. It is unlikely that any other world character has ever been as ignorant of economics, as misinformed about international relations, as blind to the character of his fellow men, and as incapable of prognosticating the future as was Karl. The big book about him remains to be written.

★★ THE AMBERLEY PAPERS, by Bertrand and Patricia Russell. \$10.00. *Norton*. The letters and diaries of Bertrand Russell's father and mother, presented with a brief description of his parents and grandparents. No particular interest for the general reader.

★ URIEL FOR PRESIDENT, by Franz Bergmann. \$1.50. *Hale, Cushman & Flint*. Mildly amusing drawings narrating the story of the backward archangel who gets Mr. Roosevelt's job.

THE GERMAN OCTUPUS, by Henry C. Wolfe. \$2.50. *Doubleday Doran*. A professional Liberal writes an extremely unconvincing book about Hitler, in an attempt to be as sensational as his title. The author's point of view is as far removed from reality as that of the allied diplomats who have gotten Europe into the mess it is in today.

MISCELLANEOUS

★★★★ AMERICAN VILLAGE, by Edwin Valentine Mitchell. \$3.00. *Stackpole*. Essays on the general stores, taverns, barbershops, drug stores, photograph galleries and other institutions of the small town in horse-and-buggy days, illustrated with photographs of Americana items in Henry Ford's Dearborn Museum, and written with simple charm and quiet humor. A book to keep — if your friends will let you.

★★★ NEW CREATIONS IN HUMAN BEINGS, by Louis Berman, M.D. \$3.00. *Doubleday, Doran*. Revelatory and excellently-written treatise on endocrinology and "the chemistry of personality". Dr.

Berman deplores the now-fashionable custom of seeking economic explanations for all the problems of human unhappiness and maladjustment; he demonstrates that in a very real sense the imbalance of modern civilization springs from the imbalance of the ductless glands; and hints that inoculation with thyroid-extract will often do the sub-citizen more good than indoctrination with Karl Marx.

★★★ NEW SWEDEN ON THE DELAWARE, by Christopher Ward. \$1.50. *University of Pennsylvania*. Issued in connection with the Tercentenary of the Swedish colony founded at what is now Wilmington, Delaware, and which was lately celebrated. A short and well-written account of the Swedes in America, who kept themselves intact for a century-and-a-half before the British swallowed them up.

★★★ EDWARD WILSON: NATURE LOVER, by George Seaver. \$3.00. *Dutton*. A charming portrait, chiefly fashioned of excerpts from his own letters and diaries, of the English artist-naturalist who perished at thirty-nine in Scott's Antarctic expedition. The breath of the Cotswolds is in these pages, and the personality of Wilson shines through every paragraph — a man of strong, simple piety who found the stuff of faith in cowslips and wren-songs, a man so conscious of God-in-nature that he faced death among the ice-floes with complete serenity. The reproductions of his drawings and sketches are delightful.

★★ FROM HOOPSKIRTS TO NUDITY, by Carrie A. Hall. \$5.00. *Caxton Printers, Ltd.* "A review of the follies and foibles of fashion, 1866-1936." Mrs. Hall has written an exhaustive study of the now-you-see-it-now-you-don't of milady's waistline. Well-written, though leaning somewhat heavily on quotations, the book is profusely, if somewhat badly, illustrated with photographs and line drawings. The format seems far below the usual Caxton-Press standard.

★★ **THIRD-CLASS TICKET TO HEAVEN**, by Helen Follett. Illustrated by Richard Floethe. \$3.00. *Winston*. The sweet side of Germany. According to Miss Follett, the Black Forest is still a paradise, untouched by the long arm of the Nazis. Her enthusiastic description of a summer there is a combination diary, novel, and travel book.

★★ **ONE MAN CARAVAN**, by Robert Edison Fulton, Jr. \$3.00. *Harcourt, Brace*. Young Mr. Fulton set out from England recently to see the world from a motorcycle. His jolting steed carried him from London eastward to New York. His adventures were many and varied. Of these, he writes amusingly if not too well. Illustrated with 132 photographs and sixty-two sketches and maps, all from the author's hand.

★★ **BACKSTAGE WITH ACTORS**, by Helen Ormsbec. \$3.50. *Crowell*. A history of acting and actors, from the Burbages of Elizabeth's time, to the Lunts, Dear Noel, and other darlings of contemporary culture-addicts. Highly readable, if you're interested in backstage shenanigans. Illustrated with many photographs.

★★ **SAVAGE SYMPHONY**, by Eva Lips. \$3.00. *Random House*. The story of an Aryan scientist's struggles in Nazi Germany, as told by his wife. Until January, 1933, Professor Lips and his wife were totally unaware of politics: from then on, life became more and more difficult; finally the Herr Professor was forced to resign his position as head of the Cologne museum and leave his Fatherland. Interesting reading, but one wonders: what is the other side of the story?

★★ **MY ENGLAND**, by Edward Shanks. \$2.50. *Funk & Wagnalls*. Typically affectionate essays on Blighty by the author of *Queer Street* and other novels. The book is well-written and frequently interesting, though in his attempts to use American slang the author invariably gets either out

on the end of a limb or right behind the Eight Ball. With admirable British circumspection, incidentally, he writes at length on *l'affaire Simpson* without once mentioning the Duchess by name.

★★ **THE TRIAL OF RUTH SNYDER AND JUDD GRAY**, edited, with a History of the Case, by John Kobler. \$3.50. *Double-day, Doran*. The liquidation of Albert Snyder, as gruesomely effected with picture-wire, chloroform, and a sash-weight, by his spouse, Ruth, and her corset-salesman paramour, related in a transcription of the trial proceedings. Mr. Kobler's editing apparently was casual enough; the book would be much better had he devoted more space to his own lively and competent introduction. There are numerous photographs of the principals.

★★ **LABOR'S NEW MILLIONS**, by Mary Heaton Vorse. \$.50. *Modern Age Books*. Three hundred pages of well-written journalistic narrative of the rise of the C.I.O. and the new power-politics unionism under the N.L.R.B., from the point of view of the extreme Left. Not good pamphleteering for the unconverted, but good propaganda for parlor Pinks and workers who want direct action.

★ **LOOKING BEHIND THE CENSORSHIPS**, by Eugene J. Young. \$3.00. *Lippincott*. Modern European History as seen from the cable editor's desk of the *New York Times*. Starts as though it were a valuable volume on the technique of manipulating news, but turns into just another inside account of current diplomacy, containing only one new item — the suspicion that the English "constitutional crisis" related to Edward VIII's weakness for Germans rather than for Mrs. Simpson.

THE INTIMATE SIDE OF A WOMAN'S LIFE, by Loona V. Chalmers. \$1.50. *Pioneer Publications*. What a lady ought to know: for women only.

THE OPEN FORUM

A STORY IN PARALLEL COLUMNS

SIR: Perhaps you will print this fable of

MR. DUBB AND MR. CHUBB

In a certain town there live

Mr. Dubb, over here in a great mansion, which is one of several great mansions,

and

Mr. Chubb, over here, in a small house, which is one among many small houses.

Mr. Dubb in his great mansion lives with Mrs. Dubb and two small Dubbs.

Mr. Chubb in his small house lives with Mrs. Chubb and five small Chubbs.

Mr. Dubb marvels at his wife, is proud of his children, and is amazed at the fine world it is.

And so with Mr. Chubb.

Mr. Dubb

Unfortunately, however, does not know although

Mr. Chubb

Mr. Dubb

and work in the same place, a factory where

Mr. Chubb

Mr. Dubb is the President
Mr. Dubb sits *here*

and
and

Mr. Chubb is a worker.
Mr. Chubb stands *here*.

(Many times each wonders how it all came about exactly as it had)
Now,

it is Mr. Dubb's aim to make fair profit, and he is glad when his factory is busy,

while

Mr. Chubb observes the needs of his family and is very glad to have steady work.

Mr. Dubb

So, you see, depends on and

Mr. Chubb
Mr. Chubb

Mr. Dubb,
Mr. Dubb

depends on but, honestly, and

Mr. Chubb

THE OPEN FORUM

III

don't appreciate it as much as they would

if

Mr. Dubb and the Dubbs

knew

Mr. Chubb and the Chubbs,

as they should.

But, of course,

they can't be expected to know each other,

because

Mr. Dubb lives *here*

Mr. Chubb lives *here*

and

Mr. Dubb sits *here*

and

Mr. Chubb stands *here*

and that's

just

that.

Then, on a certain day,

a labor organization comes to town

and convinces

Mr. Chubb

but not

Mr. Dubb

that a labor organization

would help them both.

So

Mr. Dubb

refuses to grant the demands of

Mr. Chubb and his

fellow workers

and a strike is called.

It fails, and leaves a bad taste

in the mouths of both

Mr. Dubb

and

Mr. Chubb.

To make matters worse,

business gets bad

and

Mr. Dubb can't sell all
the products that his great
factory is producing

and

Mr. Chubb and others like

him haven't enough money

to buy all the products that

Mr. Dubb and others like
him can't sell.

So

Mr. Dubb decides to cut his
factory expenses
he

and

fires

many workers, including Mr.

Chubb.

Then,

Mr. Dubb sees the demand
for his goods going
down

and down

and down

while

Mr. Chubb sees his

		small savings going down and down and down, until he is forced to go on Relief.
	So	
Mr. Dubb begins to kick be- cause taxes go up for Relief and the government tries to tell him how to run his business	and	Mr. Chubb begins to kick because he can't get a decent job and the government doesn't do more for him,
	and	
Mr. Dubb rants about rugged individualism and deteriora- tion of the stock;		Mr. Chubb rants about greedy Capitalism and bloody revolution;
	until, one fine day, and die	
Mr. Dubb, of a stroke,		Mr. Chubb, in a riot,
	and their spirits meet each other as they pass into the Beyond.	
Mr. Dubb	looks at	Mr. Chubb
	and	
Mr. Dubb	looks at	Mr. Chubb
	and	
	both,	
	at the same time,	
	say	
	"Hello."	

BUT WHAT A FINE TIME TO GET TOGETHER!

EDWIN E. NIEDERBERGER

*Pittsburgh,
Pennsylvania.*



TWO-THIRDS OF A NATION

SIR: It was interesting to read in the July MERCURY Mr. Channing Pollock's statement that only two-thirds of our nation counts. And here I had been under the impression that I mattered! Silly of me, wasn't it? I have been a WPA worker off-and-on for nearly three years, and sometimes I almost thought I was rather useful. I even believed that I was being a good citizen by training my son to be loyal and helpful and straightforward. But of course

he had no right to be born, so it doesn't matter that he's healthy and intelligent. He is of no potential value to his country, except possibly as cannon-fodder in the 1960s, if the government doesn't permit him to starve in the meantime.

It will be a great consolation to me next time I am dropped from the WPA (I've been dropped twice; thrown to the taxpayers to keep them quiet, and then reinstated to keep *me* quiet) and begin to

starve, to know that it doesn't matter. I shall shrug and reflect, "It doesn't really matter. I don't count. The people who count are not starving—the insurance clerks, stockbrokers, travelling salesmen, advertising men—those useful individuals who urge us to stimulate our gums, refresh ourselves, and absorb Vitamin D—and above all our editors—won't starve, for they are People Who Matter."

I suppose it is biased of me, but I really cannot help thinking that the United States would be a better country if there were fewer yachts and racing stables and palatial summer homes, and more strong, adequately-cared-for children. And I have a distinct impression that the People Who Have are not going to bring this about through the great goodness of their hearts. I suppose I've just got the gimme's. . . .

If you should print this—I see no reason why you should, but it would gratify me—please remember that the WPA has an understandable objection to publicity which it may consider even faintly prejudicial. Therefore please use only my initials.

M. D.

*Irvington,
New Jersey.*

SIR: I doubt if I have ever been as grateful for an article as for Channing Pollock's "Two-Thirds of a Nation" in the July *MERCURY*. And if your circulation takes an unexpected leap, please let me have my small share of credit. For ever since the piece appeared I have been boldly quoting it and sending friend and foe to go find the first full-length portrait of Roosevelt.

To have a man of Channing Pollock's idealism and standing come forward and so tellingly phrase what millions of us have been thinking means a step forward of the most significant sort. I told the Cannes boat analogy at a tea yesterday afternoon to several Earle-Roosevelt zealots. The discussion became so vehement that our hostess had to make peace. But the parable stood—irrefutable!

As one who has worked for daily bread and broken it, and divided it, too, without fanfare, with Mr. Roosevelt's "one-third", I repeat I am profoundly grateful for the answers to make when gentle souls say to me, a gentle soul, "why do you hate Roosevelt?"

MARGARET LUKES WISE

*Lansdowne,
Pennsylvania.*

SIR: Can it be that the Channing Pollock, who this last winter gave a series of broadcasts on Kindness, Happiness, and other Christian virtues (paid for, I suppose, at so much per minute by the sponsor), is the same Channing Pollock who contributed to *THE MERCURY* "Two-Thirds of a Nation"? If so, which is the real Mr. Pollock—the broadcaster who oozed charity and brotherly-love, or the magazine contributor who mixed venom with his ink and exuded hatred for the President of the United States?

It appears to be a case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

I have always regarded myself as a normally thick-skinned, tough-minded individual; but "Two-Thirds of a Nation" placed too great a strain upon my patience. The arrogance with which Mr. Pollock claims for his class—"the two-thirds that matters"—all the excellences of mental ability and economic sufficiency provokes even my worm-like soul to revolt. With one stroke of his pen he nonchalantly dismisses as unworthy of any consideration forty million American citizens.

For relieving Mr. Pollock's discomfort from Mr. Roosevelt's nagging in his fire-side talks I offer a simple remedy. Just turn the dial of the radio to another station. That is precisely what I shall do if ever again over the air Mr. Pollock starts to nag us with his piously platitudinous sermons.

H. DE F. WIDGER

*Charleston,
Illinois.*

SIR: It is high time someone said the things that your magazine is saying. Of course, you know that your magazine is tops. But perhaps on occasion you do not mind hearing your judgment underscored by others. Just about the time I reach the point of eruption on some subject, out comes THE MERCURY, taking the words right out of my mouth. The Channing Pollock article "Two-Thirds of a Nation" is a case in point. It may not be quoting the title exactly right, for the magazine is now in other hands—fifteen persons have already read that particular article from my copy, and they tell me that they, too, are going to buy one, in order to have the article for further reference.

I wish "Two-Thirds of a Nation" were required reading in every school and office and factory in the land. Maybe the forgotten men and women would begin to organize and act as units. Heaven knows, I should be glad to do something. But before I get too overt, I want to feel that I will accomplish something more than a government investigation for myself. Anyway, with all my friends, relatives, and acquaintances, I thank you for "Two-Thirds of a Nation".

CLARA BELLE THOMPSON

*Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania.*

SIR: THE MERCURY has come to me for many years. Occasionally the subscription has lapsed, causing a void in my reading which was quickly remedied. It is a two-kick magazine. One kick comes from the contributors and the other from the Open Forum. It is tops on free speech. It can take as well as give criticism. That is a token of virility.

It is a sore temptation to compare the constructive comment of Messrs. Sinclair and Coyle with the lurid and inflammatory tirade of Mr. Pollock in the July number. Passing over the latter's vulgar references to the President, his pathological obloquy and glamorous misstatements, his conclusion is conspicuous: President Roosevelt is

"a dangerous man"! Yes, dangerous to the Whitney's, Mitchells, and Liberty Leaguers who have the consistent ignoble trait of deserting their government in times of stress. This is the Tory class that Washington hanged and Jackson threatened and F.D.R. has sent to the cleaners!

P. T. ANDERSON

*Hogeland,
Montana.*

SIR: Just a note to tell you how much I enjoyed your July number, especially the articles "Two-Thirds of a Nation", by Channing Pollock, and the editorial "The LaFollette Platform". If Herbert Spencer and other great English writers were correct in their view of the function to be performed by the State, then the present Administration is embarked upon an unsound course. I think your magazine is doing a great work in exposing its fallacies.

NORMAN FARRELL

*Nashville,
Tennessee.*

THERE IS ONE BORN EVERY MINUTE

SIR: The world moves on, and the Post Office Department catches up with evil-doers; but one can't help longing for the old days when it was every man for himself and the slow-witted were stuck. I never was one to waste sympathy on the fellow who bought a gold brick or the Brooklyn Bridge; he was a hog and deserved what he got—or failed to get. If a simple and greedy soul hands a hundred dollars to a confidence man in the expectation of receiving in return something that will transform his century notes into grands—well, why shouldn't he be fooled, and fooled plenty?

I remember the time, many years ago, when I mailed a dollar bill in response to the following ad: "One hundred yards of pure black silk, one dollar." I chuckled at the stupidity of anyone who would give

away that much silk for such a small fraction of its value, but I did not hesitate to take advantage of his stupidity. I got the silk, all right — neatly wound about a tiny spool that went easily into my vest pocket. The ad mentioned merely the length of the silk, not its width, and so there was nothing I could do about the fact that it was only as wide as a single fine thread. If it happened today I could, and probably would, take the matter up with the postal authorities and have the advertiser punished for using the mails to defraud. But I'd be dead wrong if I did.

There were many other sucker gags in the mail-order business in those days, some of them clever, most of them amusing. One enterprising gentleman conceived the idea of selling a "perfect print of George Washington, the father of our country, made from a steel-etching by one of the nation's leading artists, for only ten cents". He was immediately deluged with a flock of dimes. If the perfect prints turned out to be two-cent stamps, was the advertiser a liar? What hypochondriac (and we are all hypochondriacs) could resist a "six-ounce bottle of natural, vital fluid, pleasant to take and absolutely necessary for the proper functioning of all the bodily organs, the absence of which has been known to bring about death — only fifty cents post-paid"? It is an established fact that the absence of water from the diet has been known to bring about death.

Ideas for making money are certainly worth money, but one wonders why the readers of the ads never stopped to think that if the advertiser knew a "Good, successful, infallible way to make money without working" he'd keep it for himself

instead of offering to disclose it to "anyone who will send a dime together with a stamped, self-addressed envelope". Unless, of course, they perceived that his secret was the advice to "Put an ad in the magazine just like mine". I believe this is one stunt the Post Office does not yet bar — an indication that perhaps all hope for the repeal of sucker-protection regulations is not lost.

There was one advertisement directed to the ladies, bless them, who were dissatisfied with their bust development. I don't know whether this would get by today; it was just a shade too cruel and a trifle indecent. "Send a dollar for the greatest bust developer in the world" the ad ran. And for their dollar bills the unhappy ladies received pictures of the hand of a man.

Perhaps the funniest incident in the annals of mail-orderdom concerns the genius who discovered the fool-proof method of ridding homes of all sorts of bugs and insects. "Are you troubled with ants, roaches, mosquitoes, bedbugs, termites, or moths?" he asked. "Send twenty-five cents for absolutely certain and complete relief. Destruction of all bugs and insects guaranteed with this revolutionary device never before brought before the public." He delivered the goods, too, complete with instructions. The device consisted of two small blocks of wood, with the following directions. "Place the insect to be destroyed on one block, then superimpose the other block, squeezing the two firmly together until the insect expires. Repeat the process until there are no insects left."

MARTIN PANZER

New York City.



TAXES — AND DEATH?

SEN: I have read many articles in your magazine and I am taking the liberty of enclosing a leaflet showing the comparison of the taxes of 1927 and 1937 which might possibly be of interest to your readers.

SEN: The leaflet:

THE DECLINE (AND FALL?) OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC

Tax Rates

1927		1937	
Income Tax — Maximum Rate	25%	Income Tax — Maximum Rate	79%
Capital Gains Tax	12½%	Capital Gains Tax — Maximum Rate	79%
Undistributed Profits Tax	NONE	Undistributed Profits Tax	27%
Corporation Income Tax	13½%	Corporation Income Tax	15%
Death Tax — Maximum Rate	20%	Death Tax — Maximum Rate	70%
Gift Tax	NONE	Gift Tax — Maximum Rate	52½%

The Debt

Surplus	\$635,809,921	Deficit	\$2,811,318,310
Federal Public Debt	\$16,000,000,000	Federal Public Debt	\$38,000,000,000
Per Capita Debt	\$131.49	Per Capita Debt	\$292.30

Taxes Collected

Capital Stock Tax	NONE	Capital Stock Tax	\$140,000,000
Liquor Taxes	NONE	Liquor Taxes	594,000,000
"Nuisance" Taxes	NONE	"Nuisance" Taxes	451,000,000
Social Security Taxes	NONE	Social Security Taxes	265,000,000
Undistributed Profits Tax	NONE	Undistributed Profits Tax	150,000,000
TOTAL	NONE	TOTAL	\$1,600,000,000

UNEMPLOYMENT — NORMAL

PROSPERITY!

UNEMPLOYMENT — 11,000,000

DEPRESSION!

Excessive taxes brings neither revenue to the government nor prosperity to the people.

R. A. BOYLE

St. Louis,
Missouri.

~

A MERCURY AUTHOR SURVEYED

SIR: If Sarah Lynwood Slay's article *A Southerner Surveys the North* was written and published solely for the purpose of irritating sane people, it was a huge success. But if it was done with any idea that readers were going to be convinced by it, then it was a huge failure! That article, to me, is the outstanding prevarication of the year, and nothing I could do or say would express how much I dislike the author. Undoubtedly, from the first sentence I have written, you have said to yourself — "A Northerner; naturally she would resent it". But you are wrong. I live in and I love the South; but I have also lived in the North, and having lived there (not

just dropped around and picked up a loose idea here and there), I feel that I am in a much better position to know and understand the people of the North, and compare them with those of the South, than someone who is prejudiced to begin with.

Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to wring that author's neck, and even that would be too good for such an ignorant flathead! How she could dare to refer to Northerners as a "race quite different" from Southerners, when she herself is so *different* from anything that ever lived, in the North or in the South, that she should be banished from all civilization! How dared she mention "courtesy", when she

can't possibly know what the word means! If the Northerner feeds his dog "canned dog-food, and his cat canned cat-food, and his children canned children's-food," then Sarah Lynwood Slay, as a Southerner, must have been living on canned rat-food.

JEAN ANDERSON

*Plainview,
Texas.*



THE CHASTITY DISPUTE

SIR: I am not a co-ed. I am, however, a student. I resent the article "Chastity On The Campus", which infers that at no other time or place save on a university campus are young people in love faced with the problem of chastity. Unlike my experienced contemporary, I am chaste. I have remained so by choice and not by accident. I should like to set forth my reasons for deciding in favor of chastity.

Religion has influenced me, not because I believe in eternal damnation for my soul if I sin, but because I am loath to violate the faith which I have sworn to practice, support, and defend. Society has influenced me, due to the fact that I expect to live all my life in a community where, I believe, chastity will be the preferred mode of conduct. I believe that I owe a debt to the parents who love and have sacrificed for me, and that that debt is not to be paid by bringing them pain and disgrace. I believe in marriage as an institution necessary to the welfare of the state and the universe. I do not propose to undermine it by becoming an advocate of "free love". And lastly, I do not believe it true that the young men of today have discarded the idea of chastity in their brides. In spite of all they may say to the contrary, it is my belief that deep in his heart every man desires to be first in every way with the woman of his final choice.

I admit the need for sex to be a normal and a healthy one. But one-third of life which is pre-marital is not too long to wait for sexual satisfaction, and should entail

no undue restraint. Regarding the technique of sex, I believe that through mutual patience and persistence a great deal may be accomplished. If I never marry, then I shall go chaste to my grave — thereby becoming what modern psychology terms "frustrated".

As a parting shot may I remark that it gives me a feeling of pleasant satisfaction, amounting almost to complacency, to dare state my views on so vital a subject and then to sign my name.

BARBARA WHIPPLE GEORGE

*Brooklyn,
New York.*

SIR: May I commend you for publishing "Chastity On The Campus" which caused much controversy — the banning of the sale of the magazine in some instances? Though I do not agree with the co-ed, she has written commendably the negative side of the question and reflects the thinking of a large group of her contemporaries.

MARVIN W. TOPPING

*Bristol,
Rhode Island.*

SIR: "Chastity on the Campus" presented an ill-considered, unjust, distorted picture of the American college co-ed. It is written to satisfy a public of sensation-mongers. Justice for the self-respecting college student demands that you print this or one of the other five-hundred-odd refutations the magazine must have received.

"A Co-Ed" laments the inaccurate, stereotyped college girls modern writers give us and proceeds to give the most inaccurate picture of all. Co-eds are not Flaming Youth; she is right there. College girls are fun-loving; not sensation-seeking. Students have a serious purpose in life, and that serious purpose is not experimentation with contraceptives. At best, A Co-Ed is arguing from a small group which, if she is the average co-ed she claims to be, she does not *know* too well. In a large university

with an enrollment of four to ten thousand, one's intimates average ten to twenty, and one's acquaintances one hundred to two hundred. One could not know well even one-fortieth of his fellow students. To say that seventy-five per cent of the girls in such an institution are not virgins is truly an unfounded statement. The writer's entire argument is a rationalization of her own position. Because she has thrown away her virginity, she must prove for her peace of mind that she was right. That she was moved to a defense is admission that she thinks defense necessary; if she is wrong, she has lost that which can never be replaced.

One may not honor the marriage ceremony, one may consider it superfluous, but a realist like our Co-Ed would admit that society still disapproves of free love. The writer seeks emotional satisfaction but she defeats her own ends, for at every step of the way she must be careful. She is careful in choosing the boy. She is careful in using contraceptives. She is careful not to get caught. The illicit pleasure of getting away with something may provide a sedative for her for a time, but it is a thief in disguise. It steals from her the chance of experiencing the deep, quiet satisfaction for which she neurotically seeks. It makes impossible the glory of initial union of body, mind, and soul. Mutual love and respect is her basis for sexual intercourse. But mutual love and respect cannot be duplicated a dozen times in a score of years, as she seems to think. One such experience lasts a lifetime.

Chastity demands no defense from me. It is its own best defense.

A CO-ED REPLIES

*Cannonsburg,
Pennsylvania.*

SIR: The article, "Chastity on the Campus" is honest and intelligent. It assumes that young women of college-age and after may indulge in sex relationship without incurring intellectual or moral damage, and

this belief is correct in a multitude of cases. The rather rash young experimenters a little later in life settle down into steady, serious, and useful members of society. The general run of censors and alarmists take for granted that non-marital sex experience is always corrupting and degrading, without ever taking the trouble to inquire if it really is so. And yet this is the only question that is really important. The author of the article looks at the matter from the viewpoint of reality. Thousands of our intelligent young women are doing the same. For this reason the article is significant and valuable.

ANONYMOUS

*Oberlin,
Ohio.*



ON THE RADIO

SIR: "Radio Horror: For Children Only", in your July issue, is to me a most complete exposure of the intolerable situation that takes place in the American homes every day. I have two children, eleven and twelve, and I certainly know how it affects them. The programs begin just as their supper is being prepared, and the food goes into their stomachs accompanied by the ebb and flow of excitement which comes on with the crashes, explosions, screams, and shrieks of the Radio Hour. We have tried having the meal a little later but then there is no time to visit with the children, scarcely time for lessons, no time for exercise, or baths.

Those who say, "Boys will be boys", and compare the Radio Hour with a Dead-Eye Dick book have not really made a comparison. A child with a book is relaxing. The words on the printed page may be exciting but there is still opportunity to think between lines and sort the good from the bad. Radio excitement moves so fast that a child must be ready with his ears for the next move or he misses out; he has no time to plan what he would do in a like instance. Most serious is the problem of my

boys' restless nights. While they did not have nightmares, they tossed and kicked and talked in their sleep, gritted their teeth and lay taut.

It would never do to toss the radio out the window. To do that would deprive them of many worthwhile things which the radio does offer, and even so the radio across the street would still be there.

MRS. G. M. BROADWAY

*Granite City,
Illinois.*



ORCHIDS

SIR: I hope that before you toss this letter into the wastebasket as being unpalatable you will read it, remembering that I and many others have the patience to read the unpalatable drivel printed in your filthy, Jew-baiting, Communist-baiting mag. With this reminder perhaps you will finish this letter merely to gain the fullest impression of my contempt for you, if for nothing else.

THE MERCURY used to be a good magazine but it has become the vehicle for nothing more than the refined bestiality, the miserable cruelty of the worst Hitlerism. It has become the spokesman for the worst elements in American life, the anti-Semitic, anti-Liberal, anti everything which stands for decency, fair-dealing, and brotherhood among men. As if the world does not see enough cruelty, sadism, and hatred of people you have to enter the field with your two-cents, feeding the vicious streak in the American people already liberally be-sprinkled with the doubtful virtues of Puritanism and Judge Lynch! I tell you the world will never prosper with such a spirit and you and your ilk are destined to oblivion as surely as all the Hamans of antiquity.

EDWARD NEWMAN

*Ann Arbor,
Michigan.*

SIR: THE MERCURY is doing excellent work in presenting an American side to

our problems. Yours is the only magazine that has come out openly for the common-sense angle to things. Your circulation should be increasing. It is too bad THE MERCURY cannot be sold for ten cents, because the masses who buy the cheaper-priced magazines are the ones who most need the information. Power to you!

CORLEY MCDARMENT

*Washington,
D. C.*

SIR: Your attacks on Adolf Hitler continue and that article "If America Goes Fascist" by one Elliot shows where you stand. Why don't you admit what you are? Financed by Jews, owned by Jews, supported by Jewish advertisers, and most of your articles written by Radicals. I am telling everyone not to buy your Red paper, and your day will come!

AMERICA FIRST

*Boston,
Massachusetts.*

SIR: I read your magazine every month and as a subscriber I want to tell you that I get more interesting information and inspiration from it than from any other publication. Your July number is especially noteworthy — Mr. Nock, Mr. Pollock, and "A Workingman" should be read by every thinking person in this country. To those who don't think it might supply the necessary food. Thank you for all you have done and are doing against the forces that are determined to wreck our country.

MRS. WILLIAM WOODWARD

New York City.

SIR: I don't buy your dirty Fascist rag, but I read "The Brides of Marx" article in the library and am wasting a cent to tell you what Mona Larc says is a lie. Particularly what she says about girl Communists all being pushovers. My girl friend belongs to the Y.C.L. and she won't let me get to 1st base. Another thing, if these girls who are trying to help make things better

for all are so ugly why don't you run this lying writer's photo and *let's see what she looks like?* I bet she's no bargain herself.

JOSEPH KATZ

New York City.

SIR: Not a regular reader of your magazine, and in despair over thought of an alien control everywhere, and the faint Americanism evidenced in almost the whole of our so-called free press, I heard recently that you are showing in the publishing field about the only independent thinking in daring forthright Americanism left in the country.

Immediately I bought a copy and started reading. The fresh and sparkling vigor in many of the Open Forum letters kept me from going to bed too gloomily that night. And the more or less scurrilous replies (what else can they do, poor things) of some whose minds show Pink, amounts quite prettily to their self-elimination in the argument. And what better way is there of destroying the pests, than exposing them gently to the burning light of day, in sound and vigorous understanding of Americanism?

Thank you with all I have left of a sickened, yet now in your pages reviving, heart.

MARY M. MORRIS

*West Chester,
Pennsylvania.*

SIR: When I asked the negro man-of-all-work at this tourist camp for writing materials, he grinned a knowing grin.

"You going to write to that little bitty magazine you just been reading?" he asked.

"Funny thing," he continued, after I had admitted that I was, "the people on their way down to the caverns reads that magazine and doesn't seem to pay much attention to it. But on the way back, lots of them cusses it and writes letters to it. Most of the time they throws the letters in the waste basket after they finish them, but sometimes they mails them."

Just what there is about the grandest spectacle in nature which makes people resent THE AMERICAN MERCURY I do not pretend to explain. Why don't you change the name of your publication to The American Thersites, for the Greek warrior "who, having no wise counsel of his own to present to the assembly, sought the notice of the heroes by reviling the god-like leaders". All this is merely my way of saying that I have been a reader of THE MERCURY since its first issue, and I hate to see anything I have enjoyed so much drooling along in its present condition. Mencken was nearly always wrong about everything, but at least, one felt that he merely had a biased outlook on normal life. Life as you see it reminds me of a Surrealist picture.

PATRICK O'DAY

*Roswell,
New Mexico.*

SIR: I read my first issue of your magazine (June) and, boy, did I get to find out what's what about what makes this world go hay-wire. The "first" issue rates "first" with me.

A. J. HANSON

*Story City,
Iowa.*



DEPARTMENT OF FREE ADVICE

SIR: I am interested in your success, because yours is one of the few magazines I bother with. Maybe my views will help.

July issue: Pollock is great. Of this kind, one a month is ample. "So I joined the Union" is ineffective rubbish that no intelligent workman could possibly concoct. This sort of gush detracts from your effectiveness. Do your job, but don't overdo it. Hit Mr. Roosevelt *hard* once a month and then *stop cold*. Kick out that ugly rubbish taken from the sayings of the great men of the past. That's cheap; it is overdoing with crudity. Turano is good. One like this every three months is okay. Hem-

ingway article — not 500 Ohio readers will approve of that kind of treatment. So who gains what?

Sex writing is okay but get someone who knows something about the practical aspects of it. Don't make such problems of it. Everybody knows about sex, even imbeciles; but Americans seem starved and unable to do anything about it. If you cannot help them, don't stir them up. "Enemies Are Valuable" is fine. One of your readers points out that you need more enemies. You do. I think Nock shows the way, only he is an intelligent man, way over most of your readers' heads. Your foe is bureaucracy. It will eat you up after Roosevelt is worms. It will outlive all existing things, except taxes. Get after it. But get somebody who knows it inside and out. These confessions of reformed bureaucrats are lousy. The dictators will surely die but you will never attend the funeral of a bureau. "Americana" gives me a feeling of laziness. I could take the counties of lower Maryland or some such region and do much better myself.

I regret the Open Forum. Who made *that* Macfadden boner? Now that you have it, cut it down. They are just a bunch of bellyaches. Stop printing praise and criticism. You have no room for that. Print only a few from among those that contribute interesting facts and readable interpretations. The "In Brief" part is somehow interesting. The last part of the current one (editor's comment) is good stuff. After all, why be serious over affairs and ruin our digestions?

Poetry — well, I guess that's your contribution to charity. Short stories — one or two an issue would help round out things. The ones of the past were usually excellent. All in all, I think you are doing right well. I hope you continue, as I would have a hard time to reconcile myself to your absence.

Washington,
D. C.

ANONYMOUS

SIR: You invite an expression of readers' views upon your continuance of "The Open Forum". In one reader's opinion, this is not only one of the most interesting parts of your magazine but also one of the most beneficial. Letter-writing, from the standpoint of expressing original thought, is becoming one of our lost arts. Yet the letter writer is stimulated to think and put his thoughts in writing, and that, in my opinion, is beneficial. I say beneficial, because I believe that few persons fail to tone down or moderate their expressions by the mere act of writing them. Before the first paragraph of his letter is written, the editor, or the author, has tended in the mind of that person to become just a little less a paragon or not quite so black a devil. Moderation creeps in just a little, but moderation is precious today. We need every grain of it. The inculcation of moderate views, in even so little a degree, is the benefit which I think comes from "The Open Forum". By all means continue it. This department has, of course, reached about the practical limit in size. I would like to see you consider its amplification, possibly along the line of a separate supplement. The scheme of condensing some letters was an excellent move in this direction because Pro Bono's worst failing, like mine, is prolixity.

E. C. WATSON

St. Petersburg,
Florida.

SIR: This debut at punching the type-writer for public consumption is prompted only by the request for opinions which appears in your July issue. If the thirty-three letters printed in that issue represent the best ten per cent of those received, the tenacity of the editor who wades through the other ninety per cent is to be admired. Reading these thirty-three documents takes more time than one can afford to spend for so small a reward. The contents of your July "Open Forum", rated approximately according to the incomparable Mr.

Thomason's code, might be classified as follows:

- (***) Constructive, semi-original, embodying ideas worth further discussion — 1. . . (Clayton Hamilton).
- (**) Lucid, intelligent commentary — 4. . . (Anonymous, on Virgins; Anonymous, on WPA; W. P. Mackay; One of The Neighbors).
- (*) Downright destructive — 11. . . Some of these contain an intriguing sentence or two, such as the rather cleverly-constructed cracks of Robert Emerine.
- () Bouquets and blanks — 17. . .

These statistics would indicate that too much space is devoted to free copy. The interesting thing is the fact that three out of the five authors worthy of notice were more concerned about putting an idea across than about associating their names with published statements. (Messrs. Hamilton and Mackay too, judging by their remarks.) Of the twenty-eight others, only four remained unidentified. Likewise,

THE ONLOOKER

*Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania.*

SIR: You ask whether readers feel you are printing too many letters. My answer is, No. It is profitable to know the variety of human reactions; some of it we approve and some we do not, and so information as to humankind is extended. Let me take this opportunity to thank you most heartily for the July editorial which gives the best critique yet seen on the LaFollette platform; also for Mr. Thomason's "The Old South Myth" — both of which seem to me of highest worth. And they do not exclude merit of other articles.

JOHN HUTCHINSON, M.D.

*Manchester,
Connecticut.*

SIR: No, you are not publishing too many letters from readers. Not enough. But you might cut down the long ones

fifty to seventy-five per cent for their own good. This would make room for more letters. Only a genius can be interesting longer than 300 words, on any one subject.

JOHN R. THOMPSON

*Pittsburgh,
Pennsylvania.*



RED PROPAGANDA IN THE PRESS

SIR: Albert Jay Nock's article, which appeared in your April issue, in which by the fine employment of irony he invites Stuart Chase or George Soule to supply a workable formula by which writers may know which of the arch criminals the public conscience has acquitted, and which of these cutthroats are, for the time being, public scapegoats, is certainly worthy of serious treatment. The article indicates how accustomed we have become to playing the part of the international goat and how pleased we appear to be fed on a diet of propaganda, garbage, and swill, so long as it is somehow garnished by an appearance of respectability. Stalin, the great Red Father of Russia, now appears to be regarded in America as a humanitarian and a lover of peace and democracy. Yet, there has never been in the history of all the world a more heartless, cruel monster at the head of a State. On the other hand, the so-called Fascist dictators have been painted in the American Press as fiends incarnate. What is the reason for this change of pace; why not give all of these brigands the same dosage of hard words? Why should Americans be duped into believing that Soviet Russia is a Democratic country and that the bloody-handed assassins who rule at Barcelona are blood brothers of American democrats? Mr. Nock is aware that our correspondents have been badgered, cajoled, and proselyted by Communistic censors until the American press has failed to tell the American public that the revolution in Spain was fomented by Russian agents for the purpose of Communizing Spain and making it a colony of Russia.

To this depth, therefore, the Fourth Estate has fallen. Its workers, its press, its wealth and influence are employed not only without objection, but apparently without the knowledge even of its editors, in the furtherance of the cause of Radicalism in America. The revolution, if it comes, will be ushered in as was the French Terror, by the molders of public opinion, who in that day were the pamphleteers and encyclopedists, and in our day are the newspapers.

CHARLES A. WALSH

*Concordia,
Kansas.*



SCHOOLS AND MORONS

SIR: I am a child of 12 years and go to a very desirable school here. I read Mr. Bell's article "A Three-Ring Circus For Morons" and, to come to the point, it was utterly ridiculous. These things may have occurred when Mr. Bell went to school but in the average school today in the majority nothing like this takes place. When I think of the nine months of school and how we work, Mr. Bell's article seems more ridiculous every time.

JANET AUER

*Clayton,
Missouri.*

SIR: "Three-Ring Circus for Morons" so accurately describes our city high school that I could believe the author had visited it, except for the fact that most of the students do not know what a Bible is, much less have ever sat still long enough to hear anything read. The citizens pay their taxes (sixty-eight cents of every dollar here goes for education) and the schools get poorer and poorer. Year after year the curriculum standards are lowered so that the morons will not develop inferiority complexes. There is no place in our public school system for an intelligent child.

J. ANDERSON

*San Jose,
California.*

SIR: I have just read the article "Three-Ring Circus for Morons" in your June issue. I am a pretty average school-girl, and I think that article is the worst misrepresentation I have ever read. Mr. Bell, if I may be allowed the "moron's" expression is a *drip!*

ANN PICKETT

*Clayton,
Missouri.*

SIR: Having read "Three-Ring Circus for Morons" in the June issue of THE MERCURY, I humbly suggest that we do away with schools.

DAVID SPRATLING

*Tompkinsville,
Staten Island.*



CORRECTION DEPARTMENT

SIR: Permit me to call to your attention the misrepresentation and inaccuracies concerning me in Fletcher Pratt's article, "Hot-Air Castles in Spain", in your April number. Mr. Pratt writes that Keith Scott Watson, in his *Single to Spain*, "tells how much the other correspondents liked Jack Minifie, the *Herald-Tribune* correspondent—the same Minifie who in April, 1937, wired his paper that 'the Anarchists did outstanding work' the previous July, when they were killing 'several thousand' suspected Rightists in the streets". The reader could hardly fail to suppose that I had written approvingly of the Anarchists' conduct in killing several thousand suspected Rightists in the streets and would be justified in inferring that the esteem of my colleagues was based on this. It is a deliberate distortion of fact.

What I wrote, in a mail story published in the New York *Herald Tribune* of April 28th, 1937, was: "The anarchists did outstanding work in the storming of the Montaña Barracks in Madrid, of the Hotel Colon in Barcelona, and in the recapture of Albacete. Defeat at any one of these points last July could hardly have failed to spell

disaster to the government." There cannot be much question about the deliberateness of Mr. Pratt's misrepresentation. The citation was not only completely distorted, but was taken from an article two-and-a-half columns long devoted exclusively to an exposé of the Anarchists, and showing by their own admissions "that they inaugurated a wholesale system of murder, terrorism and confiscation throughout the countryside, that the government was defied and its property seized . . ." Earlier in the article I pointed out that "Libertarian principles have proved an attraction and a shield to the worst blackguards in Spain".

Liberal inaccuracy, Mr. Pratt calls me Jack, terms the mail story which he distorts a cable, and wrongly fathers on Mr. Watson an appreciation of my popularity with my colleagues.

JAMES M. MINIFIE

Rome,
Italy.

THE AUTHOR REPLIES

SIR: With regard to Mr. Minifie's protest, I can only say that I am extremely sorry he should have taken exception to anything I wrote. I have met Mr. Minifie, and think he is personally a perfectly swell guy. Certainly I have no reason whatever deliberately to distort facts to rub him the wrong way.

On the specific points, I am quite willing to grant that Mr. Minifie had no intention of referring to the Spanish anarchists in anything but terms of repugnance. He ought to know. However, if his intentions were good, he has only furnished another paving stone for hell; surely "The anarchists did outstanding work," is a strange phrase to use with regard to something you dislike root and branch, especially in view of the fact that the "work" he praises was the immediate prelude and accompaniment to the massacres he (in his letter) deplores. If he intended to make a distinction it seems to me the dispatch was the place to make it. It may interest Mr. Minifie to know that

his unfortunate phrase, as well as others in his dispatches of April 28 and May 3, 1937, is being quoted as approval and justification by anarchist and Trotskyste apologists here.

With regard to the Watson book, I can only repeat what I said in the article. On pages 56-60 inclusive, Minifie appears, talking politics with the boys and having a jolly good time. Elsewhere in the book it is mentioned how correspondents suspected of not having the proper (i.e., Red) sympathies are sent to Coventry. One can only draw the conclusion that Watson had no such suspicions of the correspondent for the *Herald Tribune*; but perhaps this was propaganda on Watson's part to make Mr. Minifie seem something he is not. Therefore, I respectfully pass this portion of the protest along to the source from which the statement was drawn, and which was made clear in the protested article.

As to the dispatch being mail or cable, the point is a somewhat minor one: the *Herald Tribune* heads both types "Special to the H T" and leaves any reader not in the office of the paper itself the impression that they are cable dispatches.

FLETCHER PRATT

New York City.



A FARMER TELLS ALL

SIR: The article in the June *MERCURY*, "Why the Farmer Fails", is really funny to a practical farmer, but as some city readers may take it too seriously, I think it worthwhile to point out some considerations which the author overlooked. Like all present-day industries, farming is done largely with machinery, and in order to make a machine economically possible, production must be on a considerable scale. Mr. Sherlock thinks that farmers should produce a great variety of articles for home consumption. Necessarily these articles would be produced on a small scale and by hand labor or with the simplest tools. The farmer who follows his plan — and there

are some — finds himself working one hundred hours a week for a subsistence so meager that the average WPA worker would turn up his nose at it. When this fact dawns upon our farmer, as sooner or later it does, he is likely to abandon his farm and get on the WPA.

The alternative is to change the plan of farming, cutting out small hand-worked crops, concentrating on one or at most two products which are best adapted to the farmer's location and circumstances, and getting the best available machinery which will increase his production to a point where he really has some cash income. Then, if he can get into a cooperative that will handle, process, and market his product to good advantage, he will at least have a chance of remaining in business through the depression. But if he sticks to the kind of farming Mr. Sherlock advocates, his prospects are — well, you had better ask Harry L. Hopkins about that.

W. D. ROUND

Wilmington,
Vermont.

WHY GET MARRIED

SIR: In the March *MERCURY*, A Wife, in "Why Get Married", belabors the boor she married. One wonders just what she found in the lout that induced her to say "Yes" on a certain occasion. If he has, or ever had, any admirable qualities, A Wife quite definitely fails to name them. "He reads the paper mornings at the breakfast table," wails A Wife. Could it be that the cad is guilty of this unspeakable thing for the purpose of erecting a screen to shut out the vision of a frowsy, soiled-kimonoed, hair-curlered, goo-daubed apparition just across the table? True, there *was* something in the "I Do" thing about "For Better or Worse", but she had her fingers crossed on the "For Worse" stuff! After the poor fish was definitely hooked, she dropped most of those traits he found so intriguing in his sweet-heart. Now, after a day in the office, when

she is tired, *he* wants to dance! The hulking oaf! Men are like that!

I would suggest to A Wife that she stop, right now, trying to keep up with the Joneses. That she trade in her filing cabinet for a kitchen cabinet and include an option on a bassinnet. That she become content to make a go of it on his income. And when day is done and he limps home from the bout with the world, that she see to it that at the door he meets a fresh, crisp, dainty bit of cheerfulness and understanding, and leads him into a spic-and-span house and sets before him those viands she knows so well hold an irresistible appeal for him. Restore his morale and inflate his ego, and he will never listen to the dulcet-voiced siren nor look at a silken-clad calf — that is, almost never.

CARLE McCULLOUGH

Ardmore,
Oklahoma.

MICROPHONE CHECK-UP

SIR: I have been reading through some recent issues, and feel moved to offer up a suggestion that may land me a membership card in the noble company of the young bright-eyes who know the Way Out. I refer to your editorial on the radio speech of the great Iowa political strategist, James Roosevelt, in which historical fact, it seems, ran out of the money. It looks to me as if most radio exhorters nowadays, both pro and anti, are inclined to trade a little on the immunity-from-challenge which hollering into a microphone confers upon the hollerer. I don't think it is to the public interest to allow them any such immunity; and therefore I suggest, as the opening gun of a campaign to keep poetic license out of politics, that each of the main radio networks keep on hand, all groomed and ready to go, a professional *advocatus diaboli*, whose job it would be to follow up every speech involving any public question with a five-minute rebuttal for the purpose of picking holes, exposing false reason-

ing, correcting windies and extemporized statistics, and generally cleaning the argument down to its basic elements of sense and reason, if any, before it has had a chance to sink in.

This, of course, wouldn't operate in any respect as censorship. It would amount merely to supplying a speaker with a sort of presiding conscience, a mild inducement to think twice before going too far, a benevolent restraining influence on such statements as that the Supreme Court is to blame for floods in the Mississippi Valley, or that amending the Wagner Act will cause millions of people to starve to death, or that if anybody except Roosevelt had been elected President we would all be fixed for life, working like beavers, and piling up money faster than a dog scratching fleas.

H. L. DAVIS

*Napa,
California.*



GOOD-BY TO THE SEA

SIR: Harold Lord Varney was right! John Waring of Seattle, in last month's Open Forum, to the contrary notwithstanding. The latter is nuts! The trouble is, Varney told only a part of it; the real situation is indescribable in our merchant marine. Mr. Waring, who describes himself as a "retired" merchant-marine officer—whatever that is—sounds like a CIO organizer to me. In my day, which was before the era of third mates, we never "retired". Oh! sometimes the old man would relieve me, or the second mate, after twelve or eighteen hours, but usually we (that is, the two mates) stood all the watches, sea and port. But today? With John L. Lewis running the Masters off their own bridges, and third mates putting their hair up in curl-papers before "retiring", I am leaving the sea to the John A. Warings, Franklin Roosevelts, etc. Let 'em have it! I'm licked!

C. G. MORECOCK

*Newport News,
Virginia.*

IN BRIEF

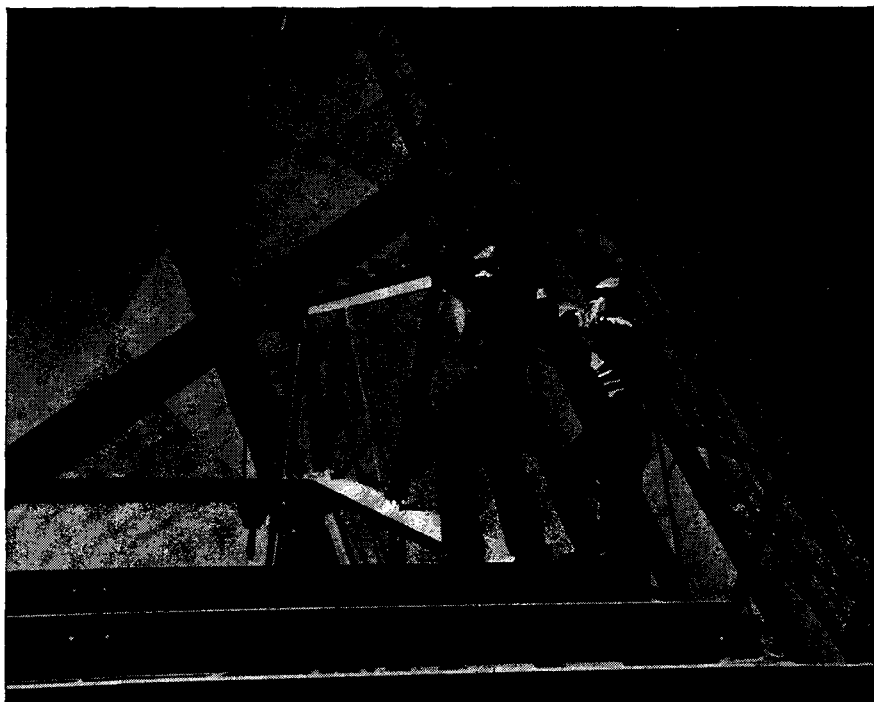
Open Forum correspondents evidently don't take vacations. The pile of letters this month is greater than ever before. . . . L. Y. N., of Glendale, California, voices a complaint of which we are getting a little tired—that THE MERCURY "tears down everything" and does not "build up". Our critic might as well realize now that THE MERCURY's editorial policy is intentionally destructive, always has been, and always will be. If L. Y. N. wants "constructive" articles, and sweetness and light, we suggest that he subscribe to *Love Stories*. . . . Run up the national debt as far as you want to, Mr. President, says Bolten Fall of New York City, because "after a few decades, public opinion will neither require nor sanction" its payment anyway. . . . Robert N. Carson, of Davenport, Iowa, asks "Why is it Communism seems to be taking a greater hold on many people?" Our answer: Why do people sit on flagpoles? . . . Too many people are trying to save America, through Leagues, Associations, and Societies, opines Whidden Graham of New York City. Agreed—and THE MERCURY will donate a truckful of their publicity releases every week to the most unworthy cause suggested. . . . Elizabeth E. Bissell, of Ottawa, Canada, likes everything in THE MERCURY except the Open Forum—but a dozen other correspondents say the reverse. . . . Our embarrassed thanks to eighteen unsung professors of grammar who called our attention, in varying degrees of politeness, to the misuse in these notes of the word *whom*. . . . The article "So I Joined the Union" affected our readers in divers manners. Charles W. Ward, of Kansas City, Kansas, thinks that only a small number of workers are "shiftless malcontents" and that they should not be allowed to control the unions. Philip I. Gibbons, of Newark, New Jersey, thought the article "so much bunk", and predicts that the "forward march of unionism will not be stopped" because "the United States Government, the Supreme Court, the Pope at Rome believe in it". From

Kingston, Rhode Island, Cincinnatus writes that racketeering labor unions are doing great damage to the workers by driving factories out of the cities. John Gilbert, of York, Pennsylvania, doesn't believe in the article, but A Goosestep Prospect from sunny California does. . . . One who signs himself "Masked Man" answers the question in the headline of a recent article — "What Can Republicans Do?" — by saying "nothing — absolutely nothing". He adds: "When Harold Lord Varney (may his tribe decrease) gets wise to himself, he will write a bigger and better article entitled, Why the Republicans Became Extinct". . . . Kenneth Craemer, of Toronto, Canada, suggests that our real political trouble is our "traditional form of geographic proportional representation"; he suggests representation by professions. . . . Harvey L. Kimerly, of Detroit, writes in to defend wholesale furniture dealers from what he assumes to be an attack by I. A. Hirschmann in a recent article "Only Suckers Buy Wholesale". A few wholesale dealers are dishonest, says this correspondent, but the majority of them are ethical and aboveboard. . . . A good many Czechoslovakian-Americans seem to have been stirred up by our article "The Myth of Czech Democracy". R. J. Skala, of Chicago, calls it "purely Hitler propaganda". John Americus, of New York City, calls it "false propaganda against Democracy". Dr. J. H. Hulka, of Long Island City, New York, calls it "typical propagandist literature". John D. Dworsky, also of Long Island City, says it is "characteristic of Nazi propaganda". K. S. Buzek, of Toronto, Canada, calls it "propaganda against Czechoslovakia". The gentlemen seem to be strangely propaganda-conscious. . . . We were considerably surprised at the reactions to our article "A Southerner Surveys the North". We never dreamt that the North — which is a rather prosaic place without any magnolias at all — could have so many defenders; but they sprang to attack the gentle Southern lady who wrote the piece with such ferocity that some of

their comments are hardly publishable. The piece so annoyed Gladys M. Rowe, of Philadelphia, that she has "pins and needles beneath my skin". Ruth Tobin, of San Mateo, California, feels that the author "should never leave her small town in Mississippi, or else return to a more open-minded mood". N. B. George, Jr., of Cincinnati, says "shame on you for printing such junk". "From out of the spawning-grounds of illiteracy, poverty, shiftlessness, and inertia — Mississippi — comes the article by Sarah Lynwood Slay", says M. Frank Sweeney, of East Cleveland, Ohio. Private John James McLaughlin, of the United States Marine Corps, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, was also pretty much stirred-up, and says that if the author is anything like her writing he would never relinquish his subway seat to her. There were few, if any, letters agreeing with the author. Among the better letters reproving her, which we wish we had room to quote, may be mentioned those from Sara Hanford, New York City; E. J. W. Fink, Mishawaka, Indiana; Saul Carliner, Baltimore, Maryland; Jesse F. Reed, Bellmore, New York; R. L. Offinger, Johnson City, Tennessee; Maxine Parker, New York City; J. P. Goettel, Syracuse, New York; and "an ex-New Yorker" now of Tulsa, Oklahoma, who says: "Congratulations on having rediscovered Elsie Dinsmore!" Well, we fought a Civil War about it once. . . . Albert L. Bell certainly brought the heavens down upon his head with his article "Three-Ring Circus for Morons". There were too many letters denouncing him even to mention. This probably indicates that Mr. Bell has a great future before him as a MERCURY writer. . . . A correspondent who signs himself "An Easterner" is envious of the anonymous author of "Professors Have Soft Jobs" — and wants us to get him one, too. Sorry, friend, but if we hear of a nice quiet cloister we are liable to take it ourselves. . . . There was a good deal more comment on Channing Pollock's article "Two-Thirds of a Nation" than we were able to publish in

this issue of the Open Forum. We might mention letters from H. N. Cooley, of Milwaukee, who says that "being just an ordinary person and having somehow received the impression that THE MERCURY is published for intellectuals only, I have never squandered two bits for a copy". But he did and found that Mr. Pollock's article wasn't over his head — but that it disgusted him completely. J. W. Sharp, of Young Harris, Georgia, speaks of the article's "essential crudity and blushing naïveté". From Conway, South Carolina, J. A. Norton writes that "if Brother Pollock is correct in his estimate that two-thirds of the nation is yelping, then I say more power to the President's good right arm". And Nationalist, from Honolulu, says the article "has given me a headache—the only headache (excepting the hangover kind) for which I have ever consciously paid out good money". . . . Practically everyone in America seems to have an opinion on the subject of chastity. At least each mail brings us more letters concerning our article "Chastity on the Campus". Oddly enough, most of the letters scolded us for having printed such a piece, holding that the subject is not one fit to be discussed in a magazine. We say "oddly enough" because all these people, by their very action, seem to have felt that the subject was important enough to make them set pen to paper themselves. That is just the way THE MERCURY feels about it. The best letters received, in our humble opinion, which we have not the space to publish even in part, were from: S. Pawke, Indianapolis, Indiana; M. N. Leach, Philadelphia; James R. Randolph, Kingston, Rhode Island; Good-time Charlie, Elmira, New York; George A. Timone, New York City; and G. T. Hendricks, Julesburg, Colorado. There was a stack of letters a foot high from college students of both sexes throughout the country: the majority of them agreed with the author's hymenal statistics, and disagreed

with her code of ethics. . . . Peregrine Salton, of New York City, is somewhat skeptical of John W. Thomason, Jr.'s, article, "The Old-South Myth". He doubts the legitimacy of many of the South's genealogies. He says: "In one well-known case of my own knowledge, a very nice woman of my acquaintance, who was the daughter of an undertaker in the South, claimed with some truth that her father was a planter" In his "first and possibly last letter to the Open Forum" Henry Emery, of Milford, Pennsylvania, gloomily predicts that we "are headed for a smash and a big smash, and the only thing we will be able to save will be the U. S. Constitution on which to rebuild the government". Are you sure you can save that, Henry? . . . From D. Wirt, of New York City, comes a request that we print in *The Other Side*, from the pen of a capable writer, "an elucidation of the thesis 'that new conditions throughout the world call for new remedies'—including a rebuttal of Mr. Nock's array of historical evidence concerning the nature of the State". We will be glad to comply, if and when such an ms appears. . . . A sure-enough orchid comes from Dr. Olin R. Martin, of Columbus, Ohio, who says: "I feel THE MERCURY to be a splendid magazine—not so much for the intent of its pages, but for its presentation of a great variety of radical ideas. Besides furnishing entertaining reading, it at times arouses one to the boiling point". Glad we boiled you over, Doc. . . . Whenever a reader berates us for a minor error in THE MERCURY we look up at the wall above our desk where the following quotation, from Lin Yutang's *The Importance of Living* (Harpers), is pasted: "An American editor worries his hair gray to see that no typographical mistakes appear on the pages of his magazine. The Chinese editor is wiser than that. He wants to leave his readers the supreme satisfaction of discovering a few typographical mistakes for themselves."



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***†† *Zigeunerlieder (opus 103), Brahms:* (Columbia, two 12-inch records, \$3.50). A first American recording of this attractive music, in which Brahms ennobled the rhythms of Hungarian national music. The small chorus under the direction of Lehman Engel sings musically, but with something less than the greatest zest.

INSTRUMENTAL

***†† *Soirée de Vienne, Schubert-Liszt:* (RCA-Victor, one 10-inch record, \$1.50). Some of the loveliest of Schubert's waltz-themes, expanded and embellished by Liszt. The performance by Moritz Rosenthal is magnificently deft and tasteful. In all, a choice item.

***†† *Sonata for Horn and Piano (opus 17), Beethoven:* (Columbia, two 12-inch records, \$3.50). A Beethoven curio, not previously recorded, this work is soundly played by Gottfried von Freiberg and Yella Pessl (piano). The horn tone could be clearer and more brilliant, but the qualities of this instrument are otherwise well represented.

RECORDED MUSIC

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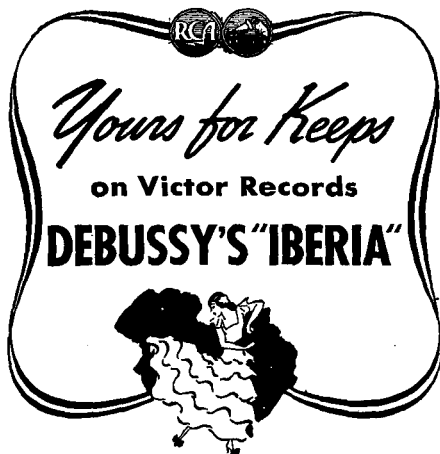
***††† *Parsifal* (Prelude and Good Friday Spell), *Wagner*: (RCA-Victor, four 12-inch records, \$8). Some of the most beautiful recording that has ever been put on disks is present to delight Wagnerites and Stokowskians, for it is the remarkable Leopold and the Philadelphia Orchestra who are responsible for this album. The reproduction of the brass is particularly impressive. One may also commend the reading.

***††† *Symphony in G minor* (Köchel No. 183), *Mozart*: (Columbia, three 12-inch records, \$4.50). This is not the celebrated G minor, but an early work dating from Mozart's seventeenth year. It is an astonishing score for any period of the composer's life, darker, more sombre and introspective than any symphonic work of his save the "big" G minor. This work, employing only strings, oboes, bassoons, and horns is played with taste and skill by Alfred Wallenstein and a small orchestra, but the recording is disappointing in its shallowness and lack of resonance. It is nevertheless worth investigating for the music it contains.

***††† *Jalousie, Gade, and Magic Fire Ritual, Falla*: (RCA-Victor, one 12-inch record, \$1.50). A stunning record by Arthur Fiedler and the Boston "Pops" orchestra of two durable favorites, played with admirable spirit. The first of these is one of those pieces which no music lover could identify by name, though it is played almost incessantly on the air and in theatres, and is one of the finest tangos extant.

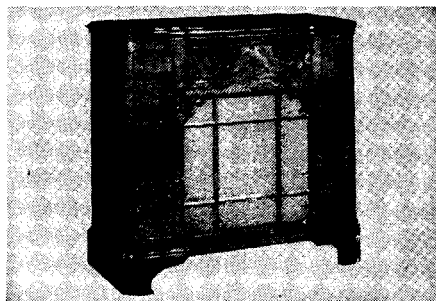
CHAMBER MUSIC

***††† *Sonata in F* (opus 99), *Brahms*: (RCA-Victor, four 12-inch records, \$8). A distinguished performance by Pablo Casals and Mieczyslaw Horszowski of the better of the two Brahms 'cello sonatas. The tone and artistry of Casals are as splendid as ever, though it is a half-dozen years since he was heard in this country. Both the piano and the 'cello are well reproduced.



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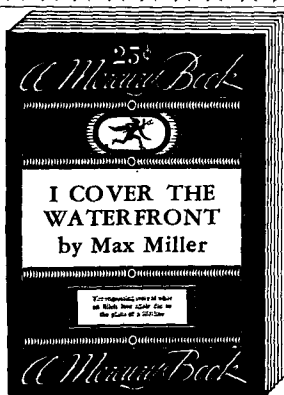
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THE CONTRIBUTORS

LAURENCE BELL (*Don't Be a Writer*), a native Southerner, is a freelance writer in New York City. **BRUCE BLIVEN** (*Twilight of Capitalism*) is an editor of *The New Republic*. **WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN** (*Stalin Is Russia's Worst Czar*), chief Far-Eastern correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor* in Tokyo, was formerly Moscow correspondent for the same newspaper. **LAWRENCE DENNIS** (*How to Rig a Bull Market*) is the well-known New York writer and economist. **GEORGE FIELDING ELIOT** (*The Impossible War with Japan*), formerly a major in Military Intelligence Reserve, U. S. A., is co-author of *If War Comes*, (Macmillan). **EDMUND GILLIGAN** (*The Wall Street Explosion Mystery*) is a member of the editorial staff of the New York *Sun*. He recently published a novel, *Boundary Against Night* (Farrar & Rinehart). **ETHEL A. HUNTER** (*We Are Not Poor*) is an assistant in the Wellesley College Library. **WILLIAM M. KINNEY** (*Do You suffer from Heart-Disease?*) is a practicing M.D. in Joplin, Missouri. This is his first published article. **DOROTHY KISSLING** (*Apostate*), of Chicago, contributes poetry to various magazines. **GAUDENS MEGARO** (*Mussolini's Coat of Many Colors*), of the Harvard faculty, is the author of *Mussolini in the Making*, (Houghton Mifflin). **HUGH MORRISON** (*New Yorkers Can't Speak English*), a native of Montana, is employed in New York City. **MARGUERITE STEEDMAN** (*Another Psalm*) contributes verse to various magazines. **ROYDEN STEWART** (*Home for Moses*), lives in Jackson Heights, Long Island. **LOUIS STODDARD** (*Little Shining Snakes*) is a farmer-poet in Esperance, New York. **ANTHONY M. TURANO** (*America's Torture-Chamber*) is a practicing lawyer in Reno, Nevada.

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